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N. H.

COURSE of LECTURES  
ON  
ELOCUTION:

TOGETHER WITH  
Two DISSERTATIONS on LANGUAGE;

AND  
Some other TRACTS relative to those SUBJECTS.

By THOMAS SHERIDAN, A.M. K.

L O N D O N:

Printed by W. STRAHAN,

For A. MILLAR, R. and J. DODSLEY, T. DAVIES, C. HENDERSON,  
J. WILKIE, and E. DILLY. M DCC LXII. H.



COURED-ESTURES

ELLO C U T T O N

TOGETHER WITH

THE DISSERTATIONS IN LANGUAGE



SOME OF THE TRACTS OF THE

REV. THOMAS SHEPHERD, A.M.

L O N D O N

Printed by W. BARNARD

In a small volume, and in a small volume

J. WILKINSON, 17, BLOOMSBURY



TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE  
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND,  
THE FOLLOWING COURSE OF LECTURES,  
AND TRACTS ON ELOCUTION,  
ARE MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

By his LORDSHIP'S

most obliged,

most devoted,

and

most humble Servant,

THOMAS SHERIDAN.



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## INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

**T**HERE has been no maxim more frequently inculcated, or more generally assented to, than that human nature, ought to be the chief study of human kind; and yet it is of all subjects, about which the busy mind of man has been employed, that which has been least attended to; or with regard to which, the fewest discoveries have been made, founded upon any certain knowledge.

Is it not amazing to reflect, that from the creation of the world, there was no part of the human mind clearly delineated, till within the last sixty years? when Mr. Locke arose, to give us a just view, of one part of our internal frame, 'the understanding,' upon principles of philosophy founded on reason and experience.

THE chief cause of the very erroneous, or inaccurate views, given of that part of our nature, before his time, was, as he himself confesses, accidentally discovered by Mr. Locke, long after he had begun his work; and not 'till after he had found himself intangled in many perplexities, during the pursuit of his subject; when lighting accidentally upon this clue, he was happily guided thro' all the mazes of that labyrinth, in which so many had fruitlessly wandered, or been lost before.



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HIS discovery was, that as we can not think upon any abstract subject, without the use of abstract terms; and as in general we substitute the terms themselves, in thinking, as well as speaking, in the room of the complex ideas for which they stand; it is impossible we can think with precision, till we first examine whether we have precise ideas annexed to such terms: and it is equally impossible to communicate our thoughts to others with exactness, unless we are first agreed in the exact meaning of our words.

ACCORDINGLY, this acute philosopher, entered into a scrupulous examination of all the terms he used, for his own purpose, in private meditation; and afterwards gave clear definitions of those terms, for the benefit of others, in communicating to them his thoughts. His labours were attended with success. It must be evident to all who examine his works with care, that he has treated his subject with the utmost precision, and perspicuity; and that all who are properly qualified to read his essay, will, with due attention, agree in comprehending his meaning exactly in the same way.

BUT in this age of speculative philosophy, they who turn their thoughts to writings of that sort, seem to have no other object in view than that of merely acquiring knowledge; without once considering how that knowledge may be rendered useful to society. From the mastery of one speculative point, they run to another, with the same kind of avidity, that misers pursue the accumulation of wealth; and much to the same end: the one, rejoicing in his hoard of concealed knowledge; the other, in his heaps of hidden gold; tho' both are equally useless to themselves, and to the world.

EVEN Mr. Locke himself seems to have been so totally absorbed in pursuits of that sort, that he has not in any part of his works



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pointed out to us, how his discoveries might turn out to the benefit of mankind, by any practical plan to try their effects. And accordingly, little or no advantage has hitherto resulted from them, excepting the satisfaction they have given, to men of a speculative turn.

AFTER having shewn that most errors in thinking arose from an abuse of words; and that most controversies and disputes, which have been carried on without coming to any conclusion, were owing to the want of clear and precise ideas being affixed to the terms used by the disputants; the only remedy Mr. Locke suggests, is, that men should carefully examine the meaning of each word, and use it steadily in one sense. And that upon any difference of opinion, the parties should define such terms as are capable of ambiguity, or are of most importance in the argument.

BUT he might have judged from the great difficulty which he himself found in accomplishing this point, and from his own experience of the great care and pains it cost, to separate ideas from words to which they were early associated, and cemented by long use; that this was a task not likely to be performed by many. One would imagine that a philosopher, before he prescribed a cure, would have traced the disorder to its source. Nor had he far to seek for the source of our impropriety in the use of words, when he should reflect that the study of our own language, has never been made part of the education of our youth. Consequently the use of words is got wholly by chance, according to the company that we keep, or the books that we read. And if neither the companions with whom we converse, nor the authors whom we consult, are exact in the use of their words, I can not see how it is to be expected that we should arrive at any precision in that respect.



If then irregularity and disorder, in this case, as in all others, must necessarily follow from neglect, and leaving things to chance; regularity and order, as in all other cases, can proceed only from care and method. The way to have clear and precise ideas affixed to the use of words, would be to have mankind taught from their early days, by proper masters, the precise meaning of all the words they use.

THE rising generation, so instructed, would be uniform in the use of words, and would be able to communicate their ideas to each other, with ease and perspicuity. Nor would their understandings be clouded, in private meditation, by the mists of obscurity; nor their sentiments, when delivered in conversation, perplexed by the intanglements of verbal disputation. And this might easily be effected, if only a fourth part of that time were dedicated to the study of our own tongue, which is now wasted in acquiring a smattering in two dead languages, without proving either of use or ornament to one in a hundred so instructed.

It is true, Mr. Locke, in his Essay on Education, grievously complains of our neglect of studying our mother-tongue. But he lays the fault at the wrong door, when he imputes this neglect to the masters of grammar schools, and tutors at the universities. This is not part of their province. They neither profess to teach it, nor do they know how. Nothing effectual can be done, without making that a distinct branch of education, and encouraging proper masters to follow it as their sole employment, in the same way as the several masters in the other branches do. And certainly whether we consider the difficulty of the thing, or the great ends which might be answered by it, the masters in that branch, ought to meet with as great encouragement, as those in any other.

To



To the want of an institution of this sort is it owing, that Locke's noble Essay on the Human Understanding, has hitherto proved of so little benefit to the world. It has indeed afforded such a gratification to men of a speculative turn, as mathematical studies do to those, whose enjoyment is bounded by the mere contemplation of truth. But do men think, or reason more clearly, than they did before the publication of that book? Have we a more precise use of language, or are the number of verbal disputes lessened? Let those who have examined the many controversial writings since published, say, whether the chief cause of these endless disputes be not still the same, 'an abuse of words.'

UPON the closest examination, indeed, it would appear, that little or no benefit in point of practice, has resulted from a display in theory, of the only part of the human mind, which has hitherto been laid open with accuracy, upon principles of true philosophy.

BUT still there are two other parts of the human mind, with regard to which the world is at this day, as much in the dark, as they were with respect to the whole, previous to the publication of Mr. Locke's essay: The one, the seat of the passions; for which we have no name as existing in the mind, unphilosophically referring it to the organ of sensation, the heart: the other, the seat of the fancy; which is called the imagination.

UPON a right regulation of these parts of the mind, and the faculties belonging to them, all that is noble and praise worthy, all that is elegant and delightful, in man, considered as a social being, chiefly depends. Yet so far are we from having any just view presented to us of those important parts of our internal frame; or any well-founded knowledge of the principles by which the faculties belonging



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to them ought to be regulated; that every day we see some new hypothesis advanced upon that subject, designed to overturn all that went before, and laying in the same claim, which all that preceded it had done, that of being the only right one.

THE variety of treatises which have lately been published on the passions, and the number of essays on taste; in which the writers widely differ from each other in their principles, and are far from agreeing in their definitions or descriptions of them; sufficiently shew, how far we are still, from having any certain knowledge of that part of our nature, to which these belong. And in this state must the world for ever continue, whilst the vanity of ingenious men shall prompt them to think, that they can do that by writing, which is beyond the power of writing to accomplish; and whilst readers shall continue to search for that in books, which it is beyond the power of books to teach. Nor are the writers of such treatises employed about a work less absurd, than would be that of endeavouring to communicate new simple ideas by definitions; or that of attempting to paint sounds.

ALL writers seem to be under the influence of one common delusion, that by the help of words alone, they can communicate all that passes in their minds. They forget that the passions and the fancy have a language of their own, utterly independent of words, by which only their exertions can be manifested and communicated. Now if this language be wholly neglected by us; if we have taken no care to regulate its marks, or settle the use of them with any precision; it will follow that the difficulty will at least be as great, to treat with accuracy of those parts of the mind to which that language belongs, as it was of the understanding, previous to the proper adjustment of words. But when added to this, it is considered that



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this language is in a very poor and defective state amongst us, and that out of the numberless emotions whereof the human mind is capable, there are but a few that have any peculiar marks belonging to them as their symbols; it will be found that the difficulty of treating justly of the passions and fancy, must be much greater, than of the understanding; whose language was sufficiently copious, and wanted only regulation; whereas in the other case we must wait for the gradual increase of the language itself, till its deficiencies are supplied, before we can attempt to regulate it properly, in order to have a comprehensive and just view of the powers of the mind. And indeed till that be done, those nations that have no names for number beyond three, might as well pretend to display all the wonders of arithmetic, as we to delineate the immense field of mental emotions, without a sufficient number of marks to stand as their symbols. But I will not anticipate upon this head, what the reader will find fully explained, in the course of these lectures, and dissertations.

It will be allowed by all persons of reflection, that there is no speculative point more ardently to be wished for, than to have it in our power to contemplate those parts of the human mind, which are still concealed from us, or falsely viewed thro' the mists of error, with the same clear satisfaction that we find in examining Mr. Locke's view of the understanding. But at the same time if the means were pointed out, of rendering both these views practically useful, by shewing how a general spirit of good sense, and clearness of reason, might be propagated thro' the natives of this country; by shewing how the passions hurtful or dangerous to society may be suppressed, and those of the nobler and social kind, calculated to promote the general good, may be brought forward, invigorated, and carried into due exertion; by shewing how the powers of the imagination may be so regulated as to diffuse a general good taste thro'



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the nation; a point essentially necessary to promote some of the noblest ends that can be answered by the two other powers, those I mean of a refined understanding, and delicate sensibility: it must be allowed that the execution of such a plan, would tend more to the real benefit of this realm, than all the uninspired books that have been written from the creation of the world to this hour.

BUT it will be said, how, or from whom is this to be expected? Are not these the very points about which the most eminent of our writers have employed their labours, hitherto to little purpose? Have not these been the chief objects in the works of our most celebrated divines, moralists, metaphysicians, critics, writers of essays, &c. and have we any reason to believe that this age will produce writings in those several ways superiour to what have hitherto appeared? Such are the questions likely to be asked by those, whose minds have been narrowed by an early false bias given to us in our system of education, and afterwards continued thro' life; I mean that extravagant idea entertained of the power of writing, far beyond what in its nature it can ever attain. But suppose it be asserted, that this is the very cause of the failure, in the attempts made by so many men of distinguished abilities to reform mankind. Suppose it be asserted that they have all used an instrument, which in its very construction was incapable of accomplishing the work they were about. In short that some of our greatest men have been trying to do that with the pen, which can only be performed by the tongue; to produce effects by the dead letter, which can never be produced but by the living voice, with its accompaniments. This is no longer a mere assertion; it is no longer problematical. It has been demonstrated to the entire satisfaction of some of the wisest heads in these realms: And readers of but moderate discernment, will find it fully proved



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in the sixth and seventh lectures, on Tones and Gesture; and in the two following Dissertations on Language.

BUT that the bulk of my readers, may not enter upon the discussion of this point, with all their prejudices about them, they are desired to reflect, that language is the great instrument, by which all the faculties of the mind, are brought forward, moulded, polished, and exerted: and that we have in use two kinds of language; the spoken, and the written. The one, the gift of God; the other, the invention of man. Which of these two is most likely to be adapted to its end, that of giving the human mind its proper shape, and enabling it to display all its faculties in perfection?

IF they want to judge by effects produced in our own times, how far the one language has the advantage over the other, let them only reflect on a recent instance of a late minister, who by the mere force of cultivating the language bestowed by the Deity on humankind, as far as he could carry it by his own pains, raised himself to the sole direction of affairs in this country: and not only so, but the powers of his living voice shook distant thrones, and made the extremities of the earth to tremble. When it is well known that had the same sentiments been delivered in the language of men; had they been sent out into the world in a pamphlet; they would probably have produced less effects upon the minds of a few readers, than those of some hireling writers. And we have many flagrant instances in our methodist preachers, of the power which words acquire, even the words of fools and madmen, when forcibly uttered by the living voice. And if the language of nature be possessed of such power, in its present neglected and uncultivated state, how immense must be its force, were it carried to the same degree of perfection, that it was amongst the ancient Greeks and Romans?

HAD



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HAD the Greeks or Romans been blest with the light of revelation ; had they been possessed of such a religion, and such a constitution as ours, together with some discoveries which time has produced ; they would have carried all the powers belonging to human nature to the utmost degree of perfection ; and the state of society amongst them would have approached as nearly to that blissful state, to which we are taught to look forwards, a fellowship with angels, as the boundaries of the two worlds would permit. And would not this necessarily be our case, were we possessed of those articles, in which the Greeks and Romans confessedly excelled us ? We want only their arts added to our sciences. Their arts, are essentially necessary to render the noblest discoveries in modern philosophy, practically useful to society. Their arts, are essentially necessary, to diffuse those benefits thro' all ranks of people, which such a religion, and such a constitution as our's, are in their own nature capable of bestowing. In short, their arts, are essentially necessary, to our making a right use of all those blessings, which Providence has showered down with a more liberal hand, on this country, than on any other in the world. Now they had no arts whatsoever, in which they excelled us, that did not take their rise, either immediately, or consequentially, from the pains bestowed upon the culture of the language of nature, the living speech. What is there wanting then amongst us, but to apply ourselves with industry to the same means, in order to attain the same ends ?

I KNOW there are few capable of tracing a speculation of this sort, thro' all its steps, so as to perceive the justness of the deduction. But I am now little solicitous about what judgement shall be passed upon the theory, since the time is approaching of trying it experimentally. A few sensible effects produced from practice, will carry more conviction to the bulk of mankind, than a thousand speculative arguments.



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arguments. It is with true satisfaction of heart I hail the approaching day, when all that I have advanced upon this subject, will be put to that test. Whoever attended the course of lectures during their delivery; or whoever shall look at the numerous list of subscribers preceding this book, will be convinced that things are now ripe for execution, and that due encouragement will not be wanting to him who shall establish a successful method of teaching the art of Delivery in this country. The constant attendance of the subscribers during the course; the profound attention with which the lectures were heard; the general satisfaction expressed by all who were present at their delivery; and the many personal applications to the author, from those who looked upon themselves as concerned in the event, either on their own or their children's account, to begin as soon as possible upon some practical plan, in order to answer the ends proposed; sufficiently confirm the truth of this assertion. And with respect to numbers, the printed list prefixed to this book will be far from shewing the real number of subscribers to the course, as many chose not to set down their names, and as some of the lists were accidentally lost. But when the world is told, that the number of subscribers to this, and a former course of the same nature, was not less than seventeen hundred, and that these were all volunteers, as there was not the least sollicitation used on the part of the author to promote the subscription; it will probably be allowed, that such a general, free encouragement, has hardly been given to any single proposal in this age.

SOME may be surpris'd to find, so few names, of persons adorned with titles, or dignified by station, in the list of subscribers: But they who are acquainted with the state of things for some time past, will not at all wonder at this, when they are told that the subscription was utterly unsolicited. Voluntary patronage amongst the  
great,



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great, has long been out of fashion. It is too frequently the case that the nobility, and persons in high station, model their behaviour by that of the Minister; and 'till within a *very short space*, there has not been an instance of *any* Minister during the last fifty years, who gave the smallest encouragement to any art or science in this country, to any work of genius or literature; or who countenanced any scheme calculated to improve the minds, or better the hearts, of British subjects.

THE last name mentioned of a patron-Minister, is that of the Earl of Oxford in the reign of Queen Anne; and the last design he had in hand, for the general good of these realms, was, as we are informed by Swift, a plan for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English tongue. A design which would probably have taken effect, as Swift also informs us, had the Queen lived a year or two longer. Yet, unexecuted as it was, the very intention of setting about so noble a work, has made his name more generally known and talked of, and has done him more honour, than all the other actions of his life. Nor was there any article which put his character in so high a point of light, as the praise which Swift bestows on him, in the beginning of his letter addressed to him upon that head. Tho' the passage may be known to most readers, yet as it deserves to be attentively considered by all, I shall make no apology for inserting it here.

‘ WHAT I had the honour to mention to your Lordship some  
‘ time ago in conversation, was not a new thought, just then started  
‘ by accident or occasion, but the result of long reflection, and I  
‘ have been confirmed in my sentiments, by the opinion of some  
‘ very judicious persons, with whom I consulted. They all agreed,  
‘ that nothing would be of greater use towards the improvement of  
‘ knowledge



'knowledge and politeness, than some effectual method for correct-  
 'ing, enlarging and ascertaining our language; and they think it a  
 'work very possible to be compassed under the protection of a  
 'Prince, the countenance and encouragement of a Ministry, and  
 'the care of proper persons chosen for such an undertaking. I was  
 'glad to find your Lordship's answer in so different a style, from  
 'what hath commonly been made use of on such like occasions, for  
 'some years past; *'That all such thoughts must be deferred to a time  
 'of peace.'* A topic which some have carried so far, that they would  
 'not have us by any means think of preserving our civil or religious  
 'constitution, because we are engaged in a war abroad. It will be  
 'among the distinguishing marks of your ministry, my Lord, that  
 'you had a genius above all such regards; and that no reasonable  
 'proposal for the honour, the advantage, or the ornament of your  
 'country, however foreign to your more immediate office, was ever  
 'neglected by you.'

WHAT a glorious eulogium of a British Minister does the last sen-  
 tence contain! How unhappy has it been for this country, that it  
 never since could be applied with truth to any of his successors!  
 But let it rejoice the heart of every one possessed of genius and talents  
 out of the common road; of every one who has any *reasonable pro-  
 posal to make, for the honour, the advantage, or the ornament of our  
 country*, that we have at last got a Minister, whose conduct, when  
 opportunities offer, will probably entitle him to this eulogium, and  
 who is not likely to neglect any of these points, *however foreign to  
 his more immediate office*. Of which he has already given proofs,  
 during the short time he has been in power, and amongst others,  
 one striking one: That when a plan upon the same subject as that  
 of Swift's was lately laid before him, he, like Lord Oxford, did not  
 make the usual answer, *'That all such thoughts must be deferred to a*  

b
time



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*time of peace :* But at the very juncture when he was engaged in a greater variety of business, than probably has fallen to the lot of any one minister ; in a most critical situation of affairs, both foreign and domestic ; he *made* leisure to examine the plan with care, and declared his intention of giving it all due countenance and encouragement.

BEFORE I quit this subject, I should be guilty of great ingratitude, if I did not acknowledge my obligations to one nobleman : who, when he was accidentally made acquainted with the nature of Mr. Sheridan's undertaking, and had read some of his writings upon that subject, did not wait to be solicited, but sought out the author, honoured him with his countenance, and by more than words encouraged him to proceed in his design. It will be hardly necessary to acquaint the reader, that this nobleman's title is to be found prefixed to this work.

July 10.  
1762.

SUB-



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As many of the Names in this List were hastily taken down at the door of the several places where the Lectures were delivered, and but very few were written down by the subscribers themselves at any of the other places, it is to be feared that many mistakes have been committed in point of spelling, as also in assigning the proper title, stile, or distinction to each name. There being likewise a deficiency of more than one third of the names of those who attended the Lectures, occasioned by the casual loss of some of the lists, the editor, in order to fulfil the conditions mentioned in his proposals, to the best of his power, is obliged to publish this list, under all these disadvantages.

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LECTURE



## LECTURE I.

**T**HAT a general inability to read, or speak, with propriety and grace in public, runs thro' the natives of the British dominions, is acknowledged ; it shews itself in our senates and churches, on the bench and at the bar.

**T**HAT Divine Service in general is not performed with that solemnity, distinctness, and propriety, which the nature of such service demands ; nor discourses delivered from the pulpit, with such powers of persuasive, or forcible elocution, as alone can make them produce their intended effects, is also generally allowed.

**I**N short, that good public reading, or speaking, is one of the rarest qualities to be found, in a country, where reading and speaking in public, are more generally used, than in any other in the world ; where the doing them well is a matter of the utmost importance to the state, and to society ; and where promotion, or honour to individuals, is sure to attend even a moderate share of merit in those points, is a truth which can not be denied.

**W**HEN therefore we reflect, that such powerful motives, as a sense of duty, of honour and of interest, have not since the revival of let-



ters (as far as we can judge) produced any improvements in those articles; we should be apt at first view to imagine, that the inhabitants of these countries are born under some natural incapacity, of arriving at any degree of excellence, in the great article of delivery: and that our Creator, when he furnished us liberally with all the intellectual powers, did not in suitable proportions supply the means of displaying those powers to our fellow-creatures.

BUT as we have never been without a few instances of men, who by some lucky circumstance in their early culture, and by taking proper pains themselves to improve their talents for elocution, have raised great admiration in their hearers, of their abilities in public speaking, we have so many proofs at least, that we are under no national curse of that sort. And as we have daily demonstration in private life, that most people speak justly, and forcibly in company, upon topics wherein they are nearly interested, we may conclude with certainty, that there are no natural impediments in their way, to do the same in public also.

IF any stranger in China, observing the uncommon smallness of feet in all the women; or, in some savage countries, the uncouth shape of the head in whole nations of Barbarians, some formed into a conical figure like that of a sugar-loaf, others flattened at the top and rendered square; should not be acquainted with the causes of these extraordinary appearances, he would be apt to conclude that they were defects and blemishes of nature. But when he should be told, that the feet of the former were bound in the tightest manner with bandages from childhood, on purpose to prevent their growth; and the skulls of the latter, from the hour of the infant's birth, whilst yet they were unclosed, and yielded to impression, were industriously moulded into those forms, from a mistaken idea of beauty;



beauty; how would he wonder at the folly of nations, that could persevere in such absurd customs?

YET much more to be wondered at, would the conduct of a civilized people be, who should persevere in a custom far more fatal; that of binding up and contracting from early childhood, and moulding into unnatural forms, the faculties of speech, which are amongst the most noble, useful, and ornamental, that are possessed by man; by which he is in a more especial manner distinguished from brutes; and without the perfect use of which, he can not, in many cases, as he ought, discharge his duty to his neighbour, his country, or his God.

If it can be proved that we are under the dominion of such a custom, the cause of the general defect complained of will be apparent: and it must be obvious that whilst the influence of that custom continues, it must produce the same effects, and no amendment is to be expected.

THAT a general deficiency in point of public reading and speaking, prevails in these countries, is allowed. This deficiency must arise either from natural or artificial causes. That there are no natural impediments in our way, has been proved; consequently they must be artificial. What those artificial impediments are, which prevent our making a progress towards perfection in those essential articles, is the point now to be enquired into.

THERE can not be a better clue to guide us to the source of the malady complained of, than a due attention to an observation before made: That there are few persons, who, in private company, do not deliver their sentiments with propriety and force in their manner, whenever they speak in earnest. Consequently here is a sure



standard fixed for propriety and force in public speaking; which is only to make use of the same manner in the one, as in the other. And this, men certainly would do, if left to themselves; and if early pains were not taken, to substitute an artificial method, in the room of that which is natural.

OF this there could not be a stronger proof given, than if upon trial it were found, that after a person had delivered his extemporaneous thoughts upon a point in which he was interested, with due force of emphasis, properly varied tones, just cadences and pauses, accompanied with suitable gesture, and expressive looks, the same individual words which he had uttered were written down, and given to him to read; if in that case, I say, it should be found that he would change his whole manner; so that neither emphases, tones, or cadences should be the same; but in their room, he should substitute such as he was taught to read with; and that all gesture, and expression of countenance should vanish. And if this should be the case when a man reads his own sentiments, (as indeed in general none read worse than authors) how much less likely is he to do justice to the sentiments of others?

HERE then is to be found the true source of the bad manner of reading and speaking in public, that so generally prevails: which is, that we are taught to read in a different way, with different tones and cadences, from those which we use in speaking; and this artificial manner, is used instead of the natural one, in all recitals and repetitions at school, as well as in reading.

WHEN therefore we consider that the finest artificial tones in the world, and the most musical cadences can never stand in the place, or answer the ends, of such as are natural, or appear so by being  
always



always used in discourse; as may be seen by comparing the Italian recitative in operas, with a well acted scene in one of our plays; what are we to expect from such artificial tones, as are discordant instead of being harmonious? or of such a method of speaking introduced, as shall make use only of a few of those bad tones and cadences to express all manner of things; instead of an endless variety, furnished by nature or custom, to manifest and communicate, not only all the *ideas* which pass in the mind, but also all its operations, affections, and passions? Is it to be wondered at that such an unnatural manner of delivery, should either produce but little effect in the hearers, or excite disgust?

WHEN we reflect that the end of public speaking is persuasion, (for the view of every one who harangues in public is to bring his hearers into his way of thinking); and that in order to persuade others to the belief of any point, it must first appear, that the person who attempts it is firmly persuaded of the truth of it himself; how can we suppose it possible that he should effect this, unless he delivers himself in the manner which is always used by persons who speak in earnest? How shall his words pass for the words of truth, when they bear not its stamp?

TILL therefore a way shall be found out to counteract for the present, and destroy hereafter, the bad custom which has given rise to this unnatural manner of reading and speaking, we shall in vain hope, for the many excellent effects, which might be produced by good elocution, in a country, where there is such an absolute necessity for it, to the support of our constitution, both in church, and state.

I SHALL



I SHALL therefore consider, in the first place, how the power of this custom may be counteracted, for the immediate relief of such as are labouring under the effects of its bad influence; and afterwards shew how it may be wholly subverted; so that the rising, and future generations may no longer be tainted by it. As the first of these is the point in which my hearers are more immediately concerned, I shall chiefly in the present course dwell upon that.

In order to counteract and get the better of any bad habit, it is necessary in the first place, that the person who is under its influence, should be *conscious* that he is so; in the second, that he should know how, and by what means this bad habit grew upon him, that he may know how to avoid those means, and unlearn what was faulty; which is the first necessary step towards improvement.

*Sincerum est nisi vas quodcumque infundis acescit.*

And lastly, that he should be made acquainted with the method of attaining what is right, in order that a good habit may succeed to a bad one. For as habit only can get the better of habit, and a man when he has parted with one manner, must necessarily acquire another; unless he knows what is right, he may only change one bad manner for another, or perhaps for one which is worse.

To accomplish these points, I shall first lay open the sources of our errors and faults in the art of reading; partly arising from the unskilfulness of masters, and partly from defects and imperfections in the very art of writing itself.

AND then, I shall shew how, and by what means, it may be in the power of every one to acquire a right manner, by proper pains and practice.

BEFORE



BEFORE I can make these points clear, it will be necessary to recollect, that we have in use two different kinds of language, which have no sort of affinity between them, but what custom has established; and which are communicated thro' different organs: the one, thro' the eye, by means of written characters; the other, thro' the ear, by means of articulate sounds and tones. But these two kinds of language are so early in life associated, that it is difficult ever after to separate them; or not to suppose that there is some kind of natural connection between them. And yet it is a matter of importance to us, always to bear in mind, that there is no sort of affinity between them, but what arises from an habitual association of ideas. Tho' we cannot so easily separate them in our own minds, yet when we come to consider them in relation to others, we see clearly enough their utter independance of each other; as is obvious in the case of men born blind, or deaf; the former of whom may be perfect masters of the language which is spoken, and the latter of that which is written; tho' neither of them can form an idea of the other's language, or of the manner, by which a communication of thoughts may be made thro' the sense which they want. And indeed any communication of that sort, between the deaf and the blind, is impossible.

ALL men who are wholly illiterate, are in the same circumstances with regard to language, as they who are born blind. And as they have no conception of words, independant of sounds, so can not they comprehend how it is possible for them to be made visible to the eye; and therefore reading, in its infancy, was looked upon as a supernatural gift; and the few who were masters of that art, considered by the vulgar in the light of magicians. On the other hand, they who are born deaf, when taught to read, have no other ideas of words, but what arise from their visible marks; and can as little conceive,



conceive, how it is possible, that they should be made obvious to any other sense, but that of seeing.

HENCE it comes to pass, that the man wholly illiterate, who has no other ideas of language, but what he has obtained thro' his ear, always uses a variety of tones in speaking, such as are customary in his country; according to the sense of the words, or the emotions of his mind. On the contrary, the deaf man, when taught to speak, (as many have been) always delivers his words in one uniform tone, without the least variation. In an intermediate state between these, the reading men, in proportion to the attention which they give, to the one kind of language or the other, either approach nearer to the monotony of the deaf man, or the variety of the illiterate. On this account it is, that the most bookish men are generally remarkable for the worst delivery: as reading therefore by means of the press, is become almost universal amongst us; and as the chief errors and defects of our delivery, arise from a faulty manner of reading; there can not be a matter of more importance, than to explain fully, how this faulty manner, must necessarily prevail, not only from the unskilfulness of masters, but also from the imperfect state of the art of writing itself, until a proper remedy be found.

FOR this end, let us consider the purposes which may be answered by reading. They are chiefly three. The acquisition of knowledge; the assisting the memory to treasure up this knowledge; or the communicating it to others. The first two, may be done by silent reading; the last, requires reading aloud. Let us now examine how far the art of writing, (under which head I include printing,) is in its present state fitted to answer the several purposes, and how far, and in what respects it is deficient.

WITH



## L E C T U R E I.

9

WITH regard to the first point, that of conveying knowledge, it is plain enough, that the written language is in a sufficient state of perfection, as any one who is once master of it, can read an author who writes clearly, so as fully to comprehend his meaning, with almost the same celerity that his eye can take in the words. And the same must also be allowed with regard to the second use of written language, that of assisting the memory. To answer these two necessary ends there has been sufficient care taken in the structure of written language; but as the third, that of reading aloud to others, was by no means a necessary object; on the contrary, as every purpose to which that is applied, might be much better answered, by giving due attention to the second use of writing, that of imprinting words on the memory, so as that they might be delivered without any use of notes, there has been no manner of regard paid to it in the whole art of writing; which does not contain one single visible mark, that can give us any assistance, in the most important articles of a good delivery, as I shall presently shew.

THE Greeks and Romans made use of this art only to answer the two first purposes; that of silent reading, and that of assisting the memory; for we never hear of its being used amongst them in public reading, as all their studied orations, poems, &c. were recited from memory; consequently, they had no occasion to carry the art of writing farther than was necessary to answer those ends. When therefore we, who have taken the model of our written language from them, would apply it to a third use, for which it never was intended, and to which it is not by any means adapted in its nature, shall we be surpris'd if it fails to answer that end, and wonder that reading aloud should in general be so ill performed?

C

To



To prove that our written language is by no means calculated to answer this third purpose, of reading aloud, it will be only necessary to shew, that it contains no visible marks, of articles, which are the most important of all others, to a just delivery. A just delivery consists in a distinct articulation of words, pronounced in proper tones, suitably varied to the sense, and the emotions of the mind; with due observation of accent; of emphasis, in its several gradations; of rests or pauses of the voice, in proper places and well measured degrees of time; and the whole accompanied with expressive looks, and significant gesture. Now of all these ingredients, not one of which can be spared from a good delivery, there are but two, that are at all regarded in the art of writing; and those are, articulate sounds or words, which are marked by letters; and stops, or pauses of the voice, which are marked by little figures and tittles. And even in these points, much greater regard, has been paid to the two first uses of written language than to the last; to the silent reader, than to him who is to read aloud to others; as may be seen by examining, in the first instance, in what manner words are spelt; in which the derivation and meaning of the words is often more considered, than any direction of the proper sounds resulting from the arrangement of the letters. In this respect indeed, we are so exceedingly loose and irregular, that even where no end can be answered by it, the words in general, as presented to the eye, would be so far from producing the true sounds, that if they were pronounced exactly as they are written, we should not know them to be of our language. And as to the second article, that of points or stops, I shall presently shew that they are by no means fitted to the natural rests and pauses of discourse; and, as they are managed, have proved the chief cause of some of our greatest imperfections in reading. But with respect to the other articles of tones, accent, emphases, and gesture, there are no visible marks to serve as guides in these. And as these latter, must  
be



be allowed to be the sources, of every thing which is pleasurable, or forcible in delivery; and to contain in them, all the powers of strongly impressing the mind, captivating the fancy, rousing the passions, and delighting the ear; it must also be allowed, that the most essential articles to a good delivery, have been wholly left out of the graphic art.

It may be said, that there is no occasion to have any marks for these, as the view of the words on paper, will excite in the mind the ideas for which they stand; and of course, all the accessory circumstances of delivery, which are usually associated with those ideas in the mind: and that as soon as we perceive by the help of the eye, the full meaning and import of any sentence, we shall be able to express that meaning to others, in the same manner, and with the same propriety and force, as if it proceeded from the immediate sentiments of our own minds. It were to be wished indeed that this assertion could be made good, for in that case, there would be few bad readers in the world; but the abundance of those, which are every where to be found, sufficiently refutes this opinion. And indeed by examining the process of such, as are most expert in the art of reading, we shall be fully convinced that the opinion is erroneous: every one of whom will allow, that he cannot deliver any piece of written composition, so well at sight, or on the first reading, as on the second; nor on the second, as on the third; and so he continues improving in his manner, every time, as the words grow more familiar to him. Nay he will allow that he can not approach nearly to the manner of delivering them, with the same propriety and force, as he would his own sentiments, 'till they as it were become his own, by being so perfectly impressed on the memory, that the mind may be wholly at liberty to attend only to the delivery; without being called off to another office from any difficulty of recollection.



The less the mind is distracted by attention to different operations, the more it can collect all its vigour to display any one. We may every day see that the person who attempts to repeat things which he has not perfectly by heart, has his faculties so absorbed in the act of recollection, that he can not attend to the manner of his reciting, which becomes proportionally defective. And in extemporaneous speaking, they who have a fluency of expression, and an easy command of words, have proportional advantages in point of delivery, over those who are obliged to hesitate, stop, and suspend their discourse, whilst the mind is, as it were, sent out of the way, upon another office, that of searching for proper words and phrases, which ought to have been ready at a call.

WERE it requisite to enter into a philosophical examination of the nature of reading, it would appear, that there are so many, and such various acts of the mind, necessary to perform that office, as would sufficiently shew us, that it is impossible such a portion of attention can be given to the manner of delivery, as it ought to have, to answer its end, if we consider it as the substitute of extemporaneous speaking. For in that case, as it is necessary that it should be performed in the same space of time as the other, how is it possible this can be done, when there are so many more actions of the mind, requisite to the one, than to the other? And tho' we should allow, that thro' skill and habit, a reader, by the quick motion of his eye, may comprehend the full meaning and import of the words, and even have just ideas excited, of the manner in which they ought to be delivered, in the same space of time only, that would be taken up in speaking those words, yet it by no means follows that his execution should answer his conceptions, or that the exact tones, and other accompaniments of discourse, should be ready at his will. For tho' they spontaneously start forth, when we speak our own conceptions,



tions, being the immediate result of feeling; yet, as we are not so easily interested in the sentiments of others, and as feeling must in a great measure be blunted or destroyed, by the attention which the mind is obliged to give to so many different points, in the act of reading; so, must we suppose, that the best reading, must fall short of the power of speaking, in all articles which depend upon feeling. And of this a well-known proof has already been given, in the instance of any good reader, who in proportion as his attention is taken off from the words, by making them familiar to him, or fixing them in his memory; and his feeling increased, by adopting the sentiments, is able to deliver them in a manner approaching nearer to that which he would use if they were his own.

Of this we have sufficient examples in comedians; whose profession it is, to speak from memory, the sentiments of others; and yet to deliver them, as if they were the result of their own immediate feeling. But it is not at the first, second, third, or even twentieth reading of their parts, that they are able to hit upon the exact manner, in which the words are to be delivered: they must first have them perfectly fixed in their memories; and even then, it is only by repeated trials, and constant practice in rehearsals, that they are able to associate to them, the just tones, looks, and gestures, that ought naturally to accompany them. Indeed there is nothing could put the difficulty of reading properly, in a stronger light to any man, than his attempting to read aloud a scene of a comedy; in which, tho' there are no tones to be used, but what are known to him, and which he acknowledges as such, when used by others, yet can he by no means command them at his pleasure; and he must be obliged to own, that to conceive, and to execute, are two different things: the first may arise from study and observation, the last, must be the effect of practice.

THAT



THAT the great difficulty of reading with propriety, and in suitably varied tones and cadences, arises from the want of sufficient signs and marks, in the art of writing, to point them out; and were there but a sufficient number of those marks, reading justly at sight, might be rendered almost as easy and as certain, as singing at sight, is a matter which might unquestionably be proved, were it to be attended by any advantage. But as that would be merely a speculative point, inasmuch as there is little likelihood that any change will be made in the art of writing, it will be more immediately to the purpose, to enquire how the art of *reading* may be *improved*, whilst that of *writing* continues in its *present* state.

HITHERTO I have considered the difficulty of reading well, aloud, as arising from its own nature only, and the imperfect state of the written language amongst us, which does not seem by any means calculated to answer that end. I have shewn how hard, nay impracticable it is, to arrive at due perfection in that point, even on a supposition that the readers have all proper qualifications for the task, and should not be under the influence of any false rules, or bad habits. But as that is not the case of one reader in ten thousand, I shall now lay open the more *general* source of that impropriety and badness of reading which is so prevalent.

BESIDE the ignorance of masters who teach the first rudiments of reading, and the want of skill, or negligence in that article, of those who teach the learned languages; beside the erroneous manner, which the untutored pupils fall into, thro' the want of early attention in masters, to correct small faults in the beginning, which encrease and gain strength with years; beside bad habits contracted from imitation of particular persons, or the contagion of example, from a general prevalence, of a certain tone or chant in  
reading



reading or reciting, peculiar to each school, and regularly transmitted from one generation of boys to another : beside all these, which are fruitful sources of vicious elocution, there is one fundamental error, in the method universally used in teaching to read, which at first gives a wrong bias, and leads us ever after blindfold from the right path, under the guidance of a false rule.

It was before observed, that we have no visible marks in writing, but for words, and pauses or rests of the voice. With regard to words, it was shewn that they are more calculated, from the manner in which they are spelt, for the use of the silent reader, than for the assistance of him that reads aloud. But tho', on account of the manner of spelling words, the difficulty of learning to read them at sight is increased, and for that reason, more time and pains are required, than would otherwise be necessary ; yet, by time and pains, we find that the point is generally accomplished ; and we come by habit, to acknowledge words, whose sounds we are pre-acquainted with, at sight, and to give them their just pronunciation, however ill adapted, the order of the letters which compose such words, may seem, to produce such sounds. This branch of reading, has been brought to perfection, from necessity ; for were words to be pronounced as they are spelt, and not according to the manner used in discourse, they could not be known or understood ; and all passages so read must appear to be nothing but jargon. But with regard to the other article of written language, I mean the visible marks of the pauses and rests of the voice, the masters, have not only been more negligent in perfecting pupils in the right use of these, but in their method of teaching, have laid down some false rules, under the influence of which, it is impossible that any one can read naturally. In the first place it is not known, (tho' it be certainly true) that the marks for pauses and stops in writing, are not more accurate,



rate, with regard to pointing out such as are used in discourse, than the words are, by the spelling, to point out their sound; consequently it ought to be the care of a master, in the one case, as well as the other, to shew wherein the difference consists; and to supply by oral instruction, and habit, any deficiency or error which may be in the art of writing, with respect to pointing, as well as with regard to spelling. Indeed the use of pointing, as was before observed with regard to spelling, is much more calculated to assist the silent reader, in readily comprehending the meaning of sentences, than in observing the due proportions of time, in reading aloud. But beside that the art of pointing, has not been managed in such a way, as to make it answer, what ought to be its chief end, it has an office assigned it quite foreign to its nature, and which it is in no shape fitted to discharge; for whereas it must be apparent that the art of pointing in its present state, ought to have reference to nothing, but either the grammatical construction of sentences, or the different proportions of pauses in point of time; thro' want of others, the masters have made use of the stops as marks of tones also. How little fitted they are to answer this end, we may judge, by considering that the tones preceding pauses and rests in discourse, are exceedingly numerous, and various, according to the sense of the words, the emotions of the mind, or the exertions of fancy; each of which would require a distinct mark, and cannot be represented by so small a number as four or five, which are used as stops. The masters therefore, have taken a short cut, to give what they call proper tones to their pupils in reading, by annexing artificial tones to the stops, which no way correspond to those which are used in discourse; and which may justly be called the reading tones, in opposition to those of the speaking kind. Of these tones in general there are but two used; one, which marks that the sense is not completed; another, which shews that the sentence is closed. For they have not even  
invented



invented so many tones, as there are visible marks of pauses. The comma, semicolon, and colon, are pronounced in the same tone; and only differ in point of time, as two or three to one; whilst the full stop is marked by a different tone. As the one consists in a uniform elevation, and the other in a uniform depression of the voice, we need no longer be at a loss, to account for that disagreeable monotony, which so generally prevails in reading; and which necessarily defeats every purpose of book-delivery, as the attention of all auditors must, not only soon be wearied and destroyed by it, but in such as have any taste, it must occasion the highest disgust.

HERE then is the chief source laid open of that unnatural manner of reading which so universally prevails; and unless a person knows this, he can never amend his error; for the sight of the stops, as naturally excites the tones which he was early taught to associate with them, as the sight of the words excites their pronunciation; and thus the habit of reading, will only serve to confirm him, in the faulty manner which he has acquired. In this case, we may apply to reading, what Montesquieu has observed of the laws; where he says, 'There are two sorts of corruption, one, when men do not observe the laws, the other, when they are corrupted by the laws; an incurable evil, because it is in the very remedy itself.'

AND indeed as in that case, the evil must be incurable, whilst the influence of the laws remains; so in the other, 'till the false rules are abrogated, and just ones established in their room, there can be no hopes of amendment. It must be obvious to the slightest enquiry, that the most effectual method of introducing a general good manner of reading, would be the giving due encouragement, to a sufficient number of skilful masters, to teach that art, by a well digested system of rules, according to the practice of the ancients; in-

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stead of leaving it to old women, or the lowest and most ignorant of mankind in the first rudiments, or to such as do not consider it as part of their province, and who indeed in general know not how to teach it; which is the case in most grammar schools: the consequence of which has been, that most boys, are either perverted by false rules, or having no rules to guide them, take up any manner which chance throws in their way, or imperceptibly yield to the influence of bad example.

BUT as a scheme of this kind, would be of benefit only to the rising generation, and as my present object is, the improvement of such as are more advanced in life, I shall in the progress of this course, endeavour to point out a method, by which the adult may get the better of bad habits, and at the same time lay down such rules to guide them, in acquiring a just and natural delivery, as will enable them to compass their end, provided they take suitable pains; and afterwards proceed in order, to pronunciation, accent, emphasis, pauses or stops, pitch and management of the voice, tones and gesture; which will comprehend the whole of what I have to offer on that subject.

LECTURE



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## LECTURE II.

**B**EFORE I examine the several parts of elocution, it will be necessary to define the meaning of the term.

**ELOCUTION** is the just and graceful management of the voice, countenance, and gesture in speaking.

**UNDER** this head, I shall consider every thing necessary to a good delivery. I shall treat of the voice and gesture separately, and include what respects the countenance in the latter article. And first of the voice, so far as the organs of speech are concerned.

A good delivery, in this sense of the word, depends upon a due attention to the following articles.

**ARTICULATION: Pronunciation: Accent: Emphasis: Tones or Notes of the speaking voice: Pauses or Stops: Key or Pitch, and Management of the voice.**

Of each of these in their order. And first of

### ARTICULATION.

A good articulation, consists, in giving every letter in a syllable, its due proportion of sound, according to the most approved custom of pronouncing it; and in making such a distinction, between the

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syllables,



syllables, of which words are composed, that the ear shall without difficulty acknowledge their number; and perceive at once, to which syllable each letter belongs. Where these points are not observed, the articulation is proportionally defective.

A GOOD articulation is to the ear, in speaking, what a fair and regular hand is to the eye, in writing; and exactness in sounding the words rightly, corresponds to propriety in spelling; in both cases, the understanding can comprehend what is offered to it, with ease and quickness, and without being obliged to have recourse to painful attention. Fairness and exactness of hand is not thought a necessary qualification of a gentleman; and is expected only from writing-masters and clerks. Nor is it a disgrace to him, even to write such a hand, as is scarcely legible. The more irregular the hand is, the more time and pains indeed it will cost the reader, to make out the words; but then he may do this at his leisure, as the marks are permanent. With regard to articulation, in which the marks of the words vanish as they are spoken, this is not the case; and therefore it should be so distinct, that the hearer, may with ease, go along with the speaker, at the same pace. For if he should stop, to set any thing right, that is amiss in the speaker, whilst his attention is employed on that point, he loses irrecoverably, all that is said during that time. It is therefore in itself, a matter much more essentially necessary, that a speaker, should have a clear and distinct articulation, than that a writer should be master of a good hand.

BUT it is a disgrace to a gentleman, to be guilty of false spelling, either by omitting, changing, or adding letters contrary to custom; and yet it shall be no disgrace to omit letters, or even syllables in speaking, and to huddle his words so together, as to render them utterly unintelligible. Yet surely, exactness in the latter, is a point



of much more importance than in the former article, in whatever light we view it. The writing of a gentleman is submitted but to one reader at a time; who may examine it at his leisure, supply any defects of orthography, and decypher the meaning, tho' the characters be ever so irregular. But the words of one who speaks in public, whether delivered, or read from notes, may be, at one and the same time, addressed to many hundred hearers; who must lose the benefit or purposed end of the discourse, in proportion as it is indistinctly pronounced.

THE reason of the unequal judgment past by mankind in this case is, that written language is taught by rule, and it is thought a shame for any one, to transgress the known rules of an art, in which he has been instructed. But spoken language is not regularly taught, but is left to chance, imitation, and early habit: and therefore like all other things left to chance, or unsettled principles, is liable to innumerable irregularities and defects. And in this case, mankind reciprocally claim, and allow indulgence to each other. That this is the true reason, will be evident from this consideration; that amongst the Greeks and Romans, where speaking was regularly taught, the smallest error committed in pronouncing, was equally disgraceful in men, as false spelling is with us.

HENCE it comes to pass that faults in articulation, early contracted, are suffered to gain strength by habit, and to grow so inveterate by time, as to be incurable; partly thro' want of attention to the point in early years; and partly thro' want of skilful persons to remedy the evil after it has been suffered to take root.

PARENTS do not think it necessary, to assist their infants, in their first attempts to articulate words; or to make them proceed regularly, in the formation of such sounds only, as are most easy, and require



require least exertion of the organs; but by suffering them to try to pronounce any words whatsoever, or even often urging them to speak such as are too difficult, they give a wrong bias to their weak tender organs, which it would require much pains to set right. Hence often arises stuttering, lisping, and a total inability to pronounce certain letters. The child being urged to utter a sound, which he finds either difficult, or impossible, of course hesitates, or substitutes another letter of more easy pronunciation in the room; or wholly omits it, and only pronounces the remaining letters of the word; and this he afterwards does habitually, never using any endeavours of his own, to alter a pronunciation which he finds easy to himself. The parent, by being accustomed to it, understands perfectly the child's meaning, in this faulty manner of pronouncing; and too often, far from endeavouring to correct it, encourages him to proceed in it, by talking to him in his own childish way; for which he acquires a sort of fondness, accounting the blemish a prettiness.

THE first master, (or rather mistress, as this charge is generally consigned to old women) into whose hands he is put to learn to read, is utterly ignorant of all rules, with regard to the art of speaking, or pronunciation. These miserable drudges profess only to teach the written alphabet, and to spell and put syllables together properly as they are usually written. But if a boy brings any impediment with him; if he stutters, lisps, or is defective in the pronunciation of any letter, they neither profess nor know how, to cure any of these; to conceal their ignorance, they call them natural impediments, or defects in the organs of speech, and the child is permitted to go on in his own way, as incurable.

WHEN he is sent to the Latin school, the office of the master there, is not to teach him to articulate, in which point he expects that



that he should come ready prepared to him. He thinks his duty discharged, if he makes him understand Latin and Greek well, and write correct exercises. The art of delivery is not part of his province; in which it is highly probable, that he is not only utterly unskilled, but very defective himself.

THUS a vitious articulation, caught perhaps from a nurse, or favourite servant, often infects a man's discourse thro' life.

THE examples of lisping and stammering, are frequent; and the inability to pronounce certain letters much more so. Smaller defects in articulation, are so general, that they pass unnoticed.

I DARE boldly affirm, that of the multitude of instances which offer, of a vitiated articulation, there is not one in a thousand, which proceeds from any natural defect or impediment. Of this point I had many proofs, in the school where I received my first rudiments of learning; and where the master made pronunciation a chief object of his attention; in which I never knew, a single instance, of his failing to cure, such boys as came to him with any defects of that kind; tho' there were numbers, who lisped or fluttered to a great degree, on their first entrance into the school; or who were utterly unable to pronounce some letters, and others very indistinctly.

WHEN Demosthenes first spoke in public, it was objected to him that he could not even pronounce the first letter of his art, *Rhetoric*; and to this day people are told that this was a natural defect in his organs: but had that been the case, it would have been impossible that he should have ever got the better of it; which we are told he did, by indefatigable pains, even a long time after he had arrived at the age of manhood. So that it was clearly owing to early bad habit,



bit, and to the want of due pains, in correcting it in time. And indeed we are also told, that thro' the avarice of his guardians, this customary, and, as it was then thought, necessary branch of education had been omitted.

THE letter *R* is very indistinctly pronounced by many; nay in several of the Northern counties of England, there are scarce any of the inhabitants, who can pronounce it at all. Yet it would be strange to suppose, that all those people, should be so unfortunately distinguished, from the rest of the natives of this island, as to be born with any peculiar defect in their organs; when the matter is so plainly to be accounted for, upon the principle of imitation, and habit.

I HAVE dwelt the longer on this head, because most defects and imperfections, in the other articles of delivery, proceed from the same source, and are curable only by the same means. As also because a good articulation is the foundation of a good delivery, in the same manner as the founding the simple notes in music with exactness, is the foundation of good fingering.

THE grosser faults of articulation, such as stuttering, hesitation, lisping, and inability to pronounce certain letters, can never be cured by precept alone; these require the constant aid of a person, skilled in the causes of those faults; who by teaching each individual how to use the organs of speech rightly, and by shewing him the proper position of the tongue, lips, &c. may gradually bring him to a just articulation. I shall confine myself to the more general faults; which tho' less observed, on account of their frequency, and their not being so obvious as the others, do nevertheless so spoil and corrupt delivery, as to make it disagreeable to the ear, and irksome to the understanding.

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THE first, and most essential point in articulation, is distinctness; and therefore its opposite is the greatest fault. Indistinctness, to a certain degree, renders the speaker unintelligible; or demands a more than ordinary attention, which is always painful to the hearer. The chief source of indistinctness, is too great precipitancy of speech. And this takes its rise in England, chiefly from a bad method of teaching boys to read. As the principal object of the master, is to make boys perfectly acquainted with written words, so as to acknowledge them at sight, and give them a ready utterance; the boy, who at first is slow in knowing the words, is slow in uttering them; but as he advances in knowledge, he mends his pace; and not being taught the true beauty, and propriety of reading, he thinks all excellence lies in the quickness and rapidity, with which he is able to do it. The prize to boys, who have made any proficiency in reading, seems to be destined to the swift; they set out at a gallop, and continue their speed to the end, without regarding how many letters or syllables they drop by the way; or how many words they juggle into one another. This habit of reading, is often transferred into their discourse; and is but too frequently confirmed at the Latin schools, where the masters, in general, having no points in view, but to make their scholars repeat their lessons by heart, or construe them in such a way, as to shew that they understand them, care not how hastily these exercises are done; or rather indeed, are obliged to urge them to a speedy manner of doing them, otherwise, it would be impossible, to get through the number of boys they have to teach. This bad habit afterwards gathers strength, because the boys are neither conscious of their own defects, nor receive any intimation of them from others. Nor do they suddenly find any disadvantages arising, from such imperfect utterance. For their masters, companions, and relations, by being used to their manner, understand them perfectly; in the same way as the prattle of children is

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understood by their parents and nurses; or as a very bad hand, is read by those who are accustomed to it. Such blemishes and defects, are obvious only to strangers, and they in good manners will not mention them. Thus the evil remains irremediable thro' life.

It must be evident that the putting any constraint on the organs of speech, or urging them to a more rapid action than they can easily perform in their tender state, must be productive of indistinctness in utterance; for in that case, the children must either drop some letters, or give them fainter sounds than they should have. And as some letters, are in their own nature more difficult of pronunciation, than others, and still more so in their different combinations, when they form syllables, it is in those chiefly the imperfection will shew itself.

To this hasty delivery, which drops some letters, and pronounces others too faintly; which runs syllables into each other, and clusters words together; is owing that thick, mumbling, cluttering utterance, of which we have too many examples. The greatest orator of antiquity, we are informed, had this fault, in a remarkable degree, even when he ventured first to speak in public; on which account his speech was exploded by the whole assembly. But we are also told the cause of this; which is, that he had the misfortune, singular in those days, of not having been trained in the art of speaking.

In all accounts of Demosthenes, we are informed, that to cure some impediments in his speech, he used to exercise himself in declaiming with pebble-stones in his mouth. What those impediments were, or how so uncommon a method, should contribute to their removal, is left to conjecture; nor can I find that there has been any attempt made, to explain this point. But the difficulty will immediately be solved, if we suppose, that the imperfection which he wanted



wanted to remedy, was, an indistinct articulation; that owed its origin to a too great precipitancy of utterance: for the pebble-stones in that case, properly placed in the mouth, would impede the usual velocity in the action of the tongue, and bring it in time to a due degree of slowness: besides, they would be a constant memorandum to himself, to avoid any rapidity of utterance, which otherwise, from custom, without some memento of that kind, he would be apt to fall into.

THE example of this prince of orators, affords the highest encouragement, to all men who labour under imperfections of speech, to endeavour their cure; as by diligence, and using proper means, they have reason to expect success. For perhaps there was not any one of his age, who laboured under so many defects in that way, even after he had advanced several years in manhood; and yet he not only got the better of all those, but arrived at such a pitch of exactness, delicacy, and power of delivery, as soon threw all competitors at a distance; tho' elocution had arrived at such perfection in his days, that it might justly be called *the* age of orators. And all this as we are informed was chiefly accomplished by his own labour and assiduity. This of all others is the most encouraging circumstance in these times, when a man can have little assistance from others, and must chiefly rely upon himself, and his own endeavours, to apply closely to the cure of any ill habits of delivery, and not to despair of success.

To cure any imperfections in speech, arising originally from too quick an utterance, the most effectual method, will be, to lay aside an hour every morning, to be employed in the practice of reading aloud, in a manner, much slower than is necessary. This should be done in the hearing of a friend, or some person whose office it should be, to remind the reader, if at any time he should perceive him mending



his pace, and falling into his habit, of a quick utterance. Let him sound all his syllables full, and have that point only in view, without reference to the sense of the words; for if he is attentive to that, he will unwarily fall into his old habit: on which account, that he may not be under any temptation of that sort, I would have him, for some time, read the words of a vocabulary, in the alphabetical order. In this way, he will soon find out, what letters and syllables, he is apt to sound too faintly, and slur over. Let him make a list of those words; and be sure to pronounce them over distinctly, every morning, before he proceeds to others. Let him accustom himself also, when alone, to speak his thoughts aloud, in the same slow manner, and with the same view. Otherwise, tho' he may get a habit, of reading more slowly, he will fall into his usual manner, in discourse: and this habit of speaking aloud, when alone, will not only bring him to a more distinct utterance, but produce a facility of expression, in which silent thinkers, are generally defective.

THERE is one cause of indistinct articulation, which is almost universal, and which arises from the very genius of our tongue; so that unless great care be taken, it is scarcely possible, but that every one should be affected by it, in some degree. Every word, composed of more syllables than one, in our language, has one syllable accented, and peculiarly distinguished from the rest; either by a smart percussive of the voice, or by dwelling longer upon it. If this accented syllable be properly distinguished, the word will often be sufficiently known, even tho' the others are sounded very confusedly. This produces a negligence, with regard to the articulation of the other syllables; which tho' it may not render the sense obscure, yet destroys all measure and proportion, and consequently all harmony in delivery. This fault is so general, that I would strongly recommend



mend at first, the practice of pronouncing the unaccented syllables more fully, and dwelling longer upon them, than is necessary, as the only means, of bringing those, whose utterance is too rapid, to a due medium. It is true there are some, who thro' the misfortune of bad instruction, or prevalence of early bad example, have a tedious drawling utterance, dwelling almost equally on all syllables, (of which I shall speak more under the head of accent); but as this is neither consonant to the genius of the tongue, nor the customary manner of speech in this country, there is no great danger of erring on that side.

### P R O N U N C I A T I O N.

THE next article which I propose to treat of, is, pronunciation. This word which had such a comprehensive meaning amongst the ancients, as to take in the whole compass of delivery, with its concomitants of look and gesture; is confined with us to very narrow bounds, and refers only to the manner of sounding our words. This indeed is the only article relative to elocution, which claims any part of our attention. The reason of which seems to be this. In all other points of elocution, all ranks and orders of men, wherever born, or in whatever situation of life, are equally liable to the same defects, and to fall into the same errors. Amongst those bred at the university, or at court, as well as amongst mechanics, or rustics; amongst those who speak in the senate-house, pulpit, or at the bar, as well as amongst men in private life; we find stammerers, lisps, a mumbling indistinct utterance; ill management of the voice, by pitching it in too high, or too low a key; speaking too loud, or so softly as not to be heard; and using discordant tones, and false cadences. These being, I say, common to all ranks and classes of men, have not any marks of disgrace put upon them, but on the contrary meet with general indulgence, from a general corruption.

BUT



BUT it is not so with regard to pronunciation; in which tho' there be as great a difference between men, as in any other article, yet this difference, is not so much between individuals, as whole bodies of men; inhabitants of different countries, and speaking one common language, without agreeing in the manner of pronouncing it. Thus not only the Scotch, Irish, and Welsh, have each their own idioms, which uniformly prevail in those countries, but almost every county in England, has its peculiar dialect. Nay in the very metropolis two different modes of pronunciation prevail, by which the inhabitants of one part of the town, are distinguished from those of the other. One is current in the city, and is called the cockney; the other at the court-end, and is called the polite pronunciation. As amongst these various dialects, one must have the preference, and become fashionable, it will of course fall to the lot of that which prevails at court, the source of fashions of all kinds. All other dialects, are sure marks, either of a provincial, rustic, pedantic, or mechanic education; and therefore have some degree of disgrace annexed to them. And as the court pronunciation is no where methodically taught, and can be acquired only by conversing with people in polite life, it is a sort of proof that a person has kept good company, and on that account is sought after by all, who wish to be considered as fashionable people, or members of the beau monde. This is the true reason that the article of pronunciation has been the chief, or rather only object of attention, in the whole affair of delivery. Yet tho' this is a point, the attainment of which is ardently desired by an infinite number of individuals, there are few who succeed in the attempt, thro' want of method, rules, and assistance of masters; without which old habits can not easily be removed.

THE difficulties to those who endeavour to cure themselves of a provincial or vicious pronunciation are chiefly three. 1st, The want of  
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of knowing exactly where the fault lies. 2dly, Want of method in removing it, and of due application. 3dly, Want of consciousness of their defects in this point. The way of getting over these difficulties I shall endeavour to point out.

As to the first article, the want of knowing exactly where the fault lies; most persons who have a provincial dialect, finding that in every sentence they utter, there are many things to be reprehended, are apt to imagine that their whole speech is infected; and therefore look upon a total cure, against the strong power of early habit, as impracticable: whereas were they to examine into the source of this irregularity, they would find it to arise perhaps, only from a different manner of sounding some of the vowels, which occurring generally in every sentence, seems to infect their whole discourse.

Thus the gentlemen of Ireland for instance, differ from those of England, chiefly in two of the sounds belonging to the vowels *ä* and *ë*, sounded by them *ā* and *ē*, and even with regard to those also, not always, but only in certain words. In many of which they give the sound *ā* to the first vowel where it is pronounced *a*, and the sound *ē* to the second, where it is pronounced *e*. Thus the words patron, matron, are pronounced by them patron, matron, the *a* being sounded as it is in father; fever sea please are pronounced like favour say plays. They soon become conscious of this diversity of sound, and not knowing exactly in what words it is used, in order to imitate the English pronunciation, they adopt the sound *ee* in all words without distinction; instead of great they say greet, for occasion occeefion, days dees, &c.

Now this mistake is evidently owing to want of method; for were there a vocabulary made, containing all the words in alphabetical order,



order, in which the English pronunciation differs from the Irish with regard to these two sounds, their number would not be very considerable, and all might by moderate practice, in a short time, make themselves completely masters of the polite pronunciation; for they scarcely differ in any other points, or at least the exceptions are so few, that they might be brought into a very narrow compass.

THIS brings me to the consideration of the second impediment in the way of such as would be desirous of getting rid of a provincial dialect, the want of method; often the source of want of due application.

As there is no method ready to his hands, each individual must form one to himself. Let him in the first place employ his attention in discovering the particular vowels in the sounding of which the provincial manner differs from the polite pronunciation. Let him by the help of dictionaries and vocabularies, make out a list of the words, in which those vowels are to be found; and get some friend to attend him whilst he reads those words over, and mark their particular sounds, distinguishing those which differ from the general rule. When by these means he is able to sound them all right, let him practice them daily over by himself, and let him select such words as he finds most difficult of pronunciation, and form them into sentences, verses, or anagrams; which he may get by heart and frequently repeat. Tho' this may seem laborious at first, the task in the progress will be found easier than is imagined, and he who makes use of this method will be encouraged to proceed, from the certainty of success which will attend every step of his progress. Whereas they who attempt to alter their pronunciation without method, only plunge from one error into another, and soon grow weary of fruitless pains.

BESIDES



BESIDE such as have a provincial pronunciation of certain letters, perceptible in all words wherein those letters are founded, there are few gentlemen of England who have received their education at country schools, that are not infected with a false pronunciation of certain words, peculiar to each county. It will not be difficult for them to collect all such words, as they seldom are numerous; and after having collected them, if they will daily repeat them, till the tongue gets a habit of pronouncing the new sounds with ease, they will soon take place of the others in their common speech. And surely every gentleman will think it worth while, to take some pains, to get rid of such evident marks of rusticity.

How easy would it be to change the cockney pronunciation, by making use of a proper method! The chief difference lies in the manner of pronouncing the *ve*, or *u* consonant as it is commonly called, and the *w*; which they frequently interchangeably use for each other. Thus they call *veal* *weal*, *vinegar* *winegar*. On the other hand they call *winter* *vinter*, *well* *vell*. Tho' the converting the *w* into a *v* is not so common as the changing the *v* into a *w*.

WHOEVER will allot a certain portion of time every day, to read aloud in the hearing of a friend, all words in the dictionary beginning with those two letters, will find in a short time the true pronunciation become familiar to him. In children this error might in a great measure be prevented, if when they are taught to spell, the letter were called by the name which marks its power, *ve* instead of *u* consonant; for in that case the very sound of the letter would guide them to the true pronunciation; whereas in the other the sound itself confirms them in the vulgar one. A child might be soon made sensible of the absurdity of sounding *v e a l* *weal*, tho' it



is impossible he should perceive any impropriety in pronouncing *u e a l* in that manner.

ANOTHER vice in the cockney pronunciation is, the changing the sound of the last syllables of words ending in *ow*, wherever it is not founded like a diphthong, but like a simple *o*, (which is always the case when the last syllable is unaccented) into *er*—as *feller* for *fellow*—*beller*, *holler*, *foller*, *winder*,—for *bellow*, *hollow*, *follow*, *window*. As also adding the letter *r* to all proper names ending in *a* unaccented, as *Belindar*, *Dorindar*, for *Belinda*, *Dorinda*. But the words in our language which come under either of the above cases are so few, that a list of them might soon be made, and the vicious habit give place to a just one by the method of practice before recommended.

WITH respect to the rustic pronunciation, prevailing in the several counties, I mean amongst the gentry, and such as have a liberal education, there does not seem to be any general error of this sort; their deviations being for the most part, only in certain words, founded in a peculiar manner by each county; and which probably owe their present pronunciation, to the continuation of the old custom; which like other antiquated modes, changes more slowly in proportion to their distance from, or want of communication with the court. And these deviations not being very numerous, as was before observed, may easily be set right. But there is one defect which more generally prevails in the counties than any other, and indeed is daily gaining ground amongst the politer part of the world, I mean the omission of the aspirate in many words by some, and in most by others. Were this custom to become general, it would deprive our tongue of one great fund of force and expression. For not only certain words have a peculiar energy, but several emotions of the mind are strongly marked, by this method of shooting out the words



words (if I may be allowed the expression) with the full force of the breath. As in the exclamations what! when? where? why? how! hark! hilt!—In the words hard, harsh, heave, hurt, whirl, whisper, whistle. If any one were to pronounce the following sentence, Hail ye high ministers of Heav'n! how happy are we in hearing these your heavenly tydings! without an aspirate thus—Ail ye igh ministers of eaven! ow appy are we in earing these your eavenly tydings! who does not see that the whole expression of triumph and exultation would be lost? And the same may be observed with regard to the opposite expression of abhorrence and detestation, if the following sentence, How I hate, how I abhor such hell-hounds! were pronounced in the same manner, ow I ate, ow I abbor such ell-hounds. But let no one imagine, that because he would not pronounce many successive words, or a whole sentence in this manner, he is therefore entirely free from defect in this point; for I have met with but few instances in the course of my experience, and those only in the most correct speakers, of persons who have not been guilty of omitting the aspirate from some words, or giving it too faintly to others. The best method of curing this will be to read over frequently all words beginning with the letter *H* and those beginning with *W*/*h* in the dictionary, and push them out with the full force of the breath, 'till an habit is obtained of aspirating strongly: nor need any one so circumstanced be apprehensive of falling into an extreme on that side, as the old habit will pull as strongly on the opposite side, and in this, as in all other points, reduce it to a medium.

THERE is another article which has produced frequent disputes with regard to pronunciation, as whether the word should be pronounced con'cordance or concor'dance—ref'ractory or refrac'tory—but points of this kind come more properly under the next head which I shall treat of, that of Accent.



THERE are some other words also of dubious sound, such as goold or gold, wind or wīnd; pronunciations of this kind have their several advocates, and there is no impropriety in using either. In cases of this nature all who have an opportunity of being informed of that pronunciation, most used by men of education at court, will have the best authority on their side; as that is indeed the only standard we can refer to, in critical cases, as well as others.

I COME now to speak of the last, and chief obstacle in the way of those who are desirous of changing a vitiated pronunciation for a right one; I mean a want of consciousness of their defects and errors in that point. And this is either total, or partial. Total, when men think they have no faults to amend; partial, when they know they have faults, but are not conscious of them at the time they commit them. The former, whilst they remain under the influence of this vain opinion, are incurable; the latter, stand in need only of method and information, to be set right. I have known many instances of both kinds, in persons who have come to London with a provincial dialect. At first, the difference of pronunciation in many words, can not but strike them; but as they know not any method by which they may acquire that which is right, they leave it to time to bring about a change; not considering that early habit can not be dislodged, but by much pains and practice. When their ears have been, for any length of time, familiarized to the new pronunciation, they no longer perceive the distinction; and instead of attributing this to the true cause, they are apt to flatter themselves, that it is owing to a gradual change wrought in their own pronunciation to the fashionable one. There are others, who take some pains to find out their faults, and to be informed of the particulars in which they differ from the established mode; and think the business is accomplished, when they have obtained this knowledge. But they do not consider



consider that to know, and to practice, are two different things; and that early custom will ever prove too strong for the former, if the latter does not come to its aid. Nothing is more frequent than instances of persons constantly mispronouncing several words, not thro' ignorance of the right way, for they will immediately correct themselves if put in mind of it; but thro' want of consciousness at the time that they use the false one, to which they have been habituated. And in proportion as this want of consciousness takes place, the habit must for ever gain strength. This will sufficiently explain the reason that so many provincials have grown old in the capital, without making any change in their original dialect. No man can amend a fault, of which he is not conscious; and consciousness can not exert itself, when barred up by habit, or vanity. In these circumstances it is not from ourselves, but from others, that we are to learn when we commit a fault; and perhaps there is no civilized country in the world where people find it so difficult to get information on this head, as England. Here it is customary enough to laugh at foreigners, and ridicule provincials, for errors and defects in pronunciation; but to inform them of their faults when they commit them, or to attempt to correct them, would be thought the height of ill manners. In consequence of this mistaken notion, they also who have most need of aid, consider it as a sort of insult when it is offered, and will not patiently submit to correction; more especially such natives of England as have any faults of this kind, who think they naturally pronounce their mother tongue right. By shutting their ears against information, they indulge themselves in the vain opinion that they have no faults; like the foolish man who shut his eyes that no one might see him. How much more rational is the behaviour of the French in this point. They know that strangers and provincials must necessarily commit faults in pronouncing their tongue; and therefore do not think that a thing which is  
naturally



naturally to be expected, is a proper subject of laughter or ridicule. On the contrary, they are always ready, with the utmost politeness, to set people right, whenever they fall into any mistakes. But as no aid of this kind is to be expected in England, and as the rectifying bad habits depends upon our consciousness of them at the time we fall into them, and consciousness can be awaken'd only by information; all who have a mind to get rid of such bad habits, must endeavour to prevail upon their intimate friends and acquaintance, never to let any opportunity slip of putting them in mind of any fault they commit. Tho' this may easily be complied with in private, yet as it is contrary to custom to attempt it in mixt company, a private sign agreed on will be a sufficient hint in that case.

## LECTURE



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## LECTURE III.

### A C C E N T.

**H**AVING treated in my former of articulation and pronunciation, I come now to consider the third article, that of Accent. The meaning of that term was very different amongst the Ancients from what it is with us. Amongst them we know that accents were marked by certain inflections of the voice like musical notes; and the grammarians to this day, with great formality inform their pupils, that the acute accent, is the raising the voice on a certain syllable; the grave, a depression of it; and the circumflex, a raising and depression both, in one and the same syllable. This jargon they constantly preserve, tho' they have no sort of ideas annexed to these words; for if they are asked to shew how this is to be done, they can not tell, and their practice always belies their precept. The truth is, the Ancients did observe this distinction, because we have it on the authority of all their writers, who have treated on the subject; but the manner in which they did it must remain for ever a secret to us; for with the living tongue, perished the tones also, which we in vain endeavour to seek for in their visible marks. Yet such was the absurdity of masters of grammar schools on the revival of ancient literature, that tho' it was impossible for them to discover the true use of the accents amongst the Greeks, rather than acknowledge their ignorance, or that those marks were become utterly useless,



less, they fell into a practice as absurd as could possibly have entered into the heads of the most ignorant Barbarians; for obstinately and pedantically retaining the marks, notwithstanding their evident inanity, to support this practice, they determined to apply them rather to a false use, than to none at all. And finding it impossible to come at the least knowledge of the accents as used amongst the Ancients, they determined at all events to adopt into their practice the modern use of them; tho' that term has quite a different signification amongst us. This practice is just as wise, as if the same term which signified man amongst the Greeks, signified horse amongst us, and we were to reason from names to things, and conclude therefore that a horse was a rational creature. And indeed it had pretty much the same effects in point of reading Greek, producing the most manifest absurdities. For whoever read Greek in that way, necessarily destroyed all quantity and measure; and therefore they were obliged to read the same individual words in a different manner in verse, from what they did in prose. Amazing! that such an absurdity did not at once convince them of their error. But as some eminent masters, of more enlarged minds, have lately abolished this practice in the chief of the public schools, and as a few editors have ventured to publish some Greek books without those insignificant marks, it is to be hoped that a reformation in this article will soon be made general.

THUS much I thought necessary to premise, that any person who has early imbibed confused notions of the term accent in the ancient languages, may banish them from his mind, and only be prepared to consider what the use of it is amongst us.

THE term with them, signified certain inflexions of the voice, or notes annexed to certain syllables, in such proportions as probably contributed



contributed to make their speech musical. Of these they had chiefly three in general use, which were denominated accents, and the term used in the plural number.

THE term with us has no reference to inflexions of the voice, or musical notes, but only means a peculiar manner of distinguishing one syllable of a word from the rest, denominated by us accent; and the term for that reason used by us in the singular number.

THIS distinction is made by us in two ways; either by dwelling longer upon one syllable than the rest; or by giving it a smarter percussive motion of the voice in utterance. Of the first of these, we have instances in the words, *glōry*, *fāther*, *hōly*; of the last, in *BAT'TLE*, *HAB'IT*, *BOR'ROW*. So that accent, with us, is not referred to tune, but to time; to quantity, not quality; to the more equable or precipitate motion of the voice, not to the variation of notes or inflexions. These have nothing to do with words separately taken, and are only made use of, to enforce, or adorn them, when they are ranged in sentences.

IT is by the accent chiefly that the quantity of our syllables is regulated; but not according to the mistaken rule laid down by all who have written on the subject, that the accent always makes the syllable long; than which there can not be any thing more false. For the two ways of distinguishing syllables by accent, as mentioned before, are directly opposite, and produce quite contrary effects; the one, by dwelling on the syllable, necessarily makes it long; the other, by the smart percussive motion of the voice, as necessarily makes it short. Thus the first syllables in *glōry*, *fāther*, *hōly* are long; whilst those in *bāttle*, *hābit*, *bōrrow* are short. The quantity depends upon the seat of the accent, whether it be on the vowel or

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consonant;



consonant; if on the vowel, the syllable is necessarily long; as it makes the vowel long: if on the consonant, it may be either long, or short, according to the nature of the consonant, or the time taken up in dwelling upon it. If the consonant be in its nature a short one, the syllable is necessarily short. If it be a long one, that is, one whose sound is capable of being lengthened, it may be long or short at the will of the speaker.

By a short consonant I mean one whose sound can not be continued after a vowel, such as c or k p t, as ac, ap, at—whilst that of long consonants can, as, el em en er ev, &c. If we change the seat of the accent in the instances before mentioned we should change their quantity; were we instead of GLŌ-RY to say GLOR'-Y—instead of FĀ-THER FATH'-ER—instead of HŌ-LY HOL'-Y—the first syllables would become short—as on the other hand, were we to dwell on the vowels instead of the consonants in the last instances they would change from short to long—should we for instance instead of bat'tle say báttle—for ha-bit hábit—and for bor'row bórrrow. This is one of the chief sources of the difference between the Scotch and English gentlemen in the pronunciation of English; I mean, the laying the accent on the vowel, instead of the consonant, by which means they make syllables long, that are short with us.

AND here I can not help taking notice of a circumstance, which shews in the strongest light, the amazing deficiency of those, who have hitherto employed their labours on that subject, in point of knowledge of the true genius and constitution of our tongue. Several of the compilers of dictionaries, vocabularies, and spelling books, have undertaken to mark the accents of our words; but so little acquainted were they with the nature of our accent, that they thought it necessary only to mark the syllable on which the stress is to be laid, without



without marking the particular letter of the syllable to which the accent belongs. They have therefore marked them by one uniform rule, that of placing the accent always over the vowel of the distinguished syllable. By which means they have done worse, than if they had not pointed out such syllables at all; for this rule, instead of guiding strangers to a true pronunciation, infallibly leads them to a wrong one, whenever the accent should be placed on the consonant. Thus all foreigners and provincials, must for ever be misled, by consulting such dictionaries. For instance, if they look for the word *endeavour*, finding the accent upon the vowel *e*, they will of course sound it *endéa-vour*. In the same manner *dedicate* will be called *dé-dicate*, *precipitate* *precí-pitate*—*hab'it*, *há-bit*—and so on. Now had they only attended to the plain rule, of placing the accent always over the consonant, whenever the stress is upon that, they would have afforded the best and most general guide to just pronunciation, that could be found with regard to our tongue. For it is an unerring rule thro'out the whole, that whenever the accent is on the consonant, the preceding vowel has a short sound. As there is also another infallible rule in our tongue that no vowel ever has a long sound in an unaccented syllable, if this article of accent were properly adjusted, it would prove a master-key to the pronunciation of our whole tongue.

WHEN we see such a palpable and gross mistake as this, in our compilers of dictionaries, we should be at a loss to account for it, if we did not reflect, that they, as well as our grammarians, have never examined the state of the living tongue, but wholly confined their labours to the dead written language; their chief object therefore has been to assist silent readers, in comprehending the meaning of the words; not those who are to read aloud, in a proper delivery; to teach men how to write, not how to speak correctly. In this



view, the marking the syllable alone on which the accent is laid, without attending to the particular letter, would answer their purpose, as it would enable writers to arrange their words properly in metre, according to the rules of English versification. Every word in our language of more syllables than one has an accented syllable. The longer polysyllables, have frequently two accents, but one is so much stronger than the other, as to shew that it is but one word; and the inferior accent is always less forcible, than any accent that is the single one in a word. Thus in the word *expos'tulator'y*—the strongest accent is on the second syllable *pos'*, but there is a fainter accent on the last syllable but one, founded *tur'*, *expos'tulatúr-ry*, as a succession of four unaccented syllables would not be agreeable to the ear, and might prevent distinct articulation. All monosyllables in our language are also accented, the particles alone excepted, which are always without accent, when not emphatical; and they are long or short, in the same manner as before mentioned, according as the seat of the accent is on the vowel or consonant. Thus, *ad'd*, *led'*, *bid'*, *rod'*, *cub'*, are all short, the voice passing quickly over the vowel to the consonant; but for the contrary reason the words *áll*, *láid*, *bíde*, *róad*, *cúbe*, are long, the accent being on the vowels, on which the voice dwells some time before it sounds the consonants.

As no utterance can be agreeable to the ear, which is void of proportion; and as all quantity, or proportion of time in utterance, depends upon a due observation of the accent; it is a matter of absolute necessity to all, who would arrive at a good and graceful delivery, to be master of that point. Nor is the use of accent in our language confined to quantity alone; but it is also the chief mark by which words are distinguished from mere syllables. Or rather I may say, it is the very essence of words, which without that, would be only so many collections of syllables. The essence of a syllable  
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consists in articulation only, for every articulate sound of course forms a syllable. The essence of a word consists in accent as well as articulation. This will be made clear by an instance. If I pronounce the word ar-ti-cu-la-tion, in that manner without distinguishing any syllable from the rest, it is no longer a word, but a succession of syllables; but when I pronounce it articulation, laying an accent on the syllable lá, that it is which constitutes a word, by uniting the preceding syllables, and the subsequent one to itself. And with respect to monosyllables, all which can properly be called words, are accented; for the particles, which are unaccented, can discharge their office perfectly in their mere syllabic state; they being in fact nothing more than simple articulate sounds to mark the relation and difference between words, and are therefore better fitted for that office, by being somewhat different from words, than if they were of the same class; and indeed in their very name of particles, this distinction seems to have been intended. But when, by being emphatical, they obtain an accent, they then become words; not in name only, but in fact; as in that case they stand in the room of words and discharge their office.

It is true this manner of distinguishing words from mere syllables is not necessary, nor the only way by which it can be done. The Greeks we know had another manner, which was that of distinguishing them by a certain tone or note annexed to each word, which under their nice regulations, must have contributed to make their speech more musical and pleasing to the ear, than that of any other nation in the world; and this was acknowledged by the natives of all other countries who visited them, and even by the Romans themselves, in the height of their glory. Nay it was known that Foreigners listened to their Orators, tho' they did not understand their language, with as much pleasure as we do to Italian singers; from  
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the mere delight they took, in the harmony of their utterance. But as this is a method not pursued by any of the moderns, excepting the Chinese, of whom we know but little, and a thing about which we can have but very obscure ideas, it would answer no end to bestow any farther consideration upon it.

THE third way of distinguishing words from syllables, is by making a perceptible pause at the end of each word. This last is the practice of many modern nations; but in languages that abound in long syllables, and whose words are therefore often composed of syllables of an equal length, this method of distinguishing them by perceptible pauses, must add to the tediousness, with which the ear is disgusted by a succession of long sounds.

SOME certain method of distinguishing words from mere syllables, must evidently be one of the first steps taken, in reducing language to any degree of regularity; and this can be done only by one of the three ways before mentioned: either by affixing an accent to each word; or a certain note or tone; or a pause at the end. The second method used by the Greeks has never been the practice of any part of Europe, and therefore it would be but fruitless labour to examine it. But it is well worth the pains to enquire, whether the first used by us, or the latter by many other nations, is in its own nature best; as it may turn our attention to a point hitherto little considered, and yet which is one of the chief sources of superiority that we have over our neighbours; and one of the greatest perfections of which our language has to boast. But above all, because the knowledge of this will make every native of these kingdoms better acquainted with the peculiar genius of our tongue, and afford him one of the best lights to guide him to a just and harmonious delivery.

Now



Now to compare these two ways of distinguishing words, by accent, or by pause; first with regard to utility, and next to ornament.

With respect to utility, it must be allowed, that the method of distinguishing words from mere syllables, which is the most evident and precise, and which takes up the least time, is best. Now there can not be a more evident or precise distinction, than that of accent; nor one which can be executed with more ease and certainty: it requires no nicety of ear, as in the distinguishing of tones, or measuring time; it only demands that one syllable should have a greater stress laid on it than others: and the only difference is in laying the stress on the vowel or consonant, which is of course acquired by natives, and by a proper method, might soon be obtained by others. But the distinction by pauses, having reference to the measurement of time, can have no certain rule in irregular discourse, and must depend upon the ear of each individual. We know how difficult it is to observe exactness of time in the pauses of music, even with the assistance of rules and marks; how much more so must it be where there are none? And with respect to brevity, it must be evident, that the way of marking them, which adds not at all to their natural time, must be preferable to that, whose very essence consists in taking up more time. In point of use therefore accent has clearly the preference. Now let us consider them with regard to ornament.

THE ornament of speech, so far as relates to sound, consists in the pleasure which it gives the ear. This is the result of harmony; and harmony, of proportion and variety, of tones and times. Now as tones are here out of the question, let us see which of these ways bids fairest for fixing a just measurement of proportion, and agreeable variety of times.

I HAVE



I HAVE already mentioned that when the accent is on the vowel, it of course makes the syllable long; and when the accent is on the consonant, the syllable may be either long or short, according to the nature of the consonant, or will of the speakers. And as the accent alone is a sufficient distinction of words, without pausing longer at the end of them, than at the end of a syllable, excepting where the sense requires it; and as all unaccented syllables are short, the quantity of our syllables is adjusted by the easiest and simplest rule in the world, and in the exactest proportion. When we consider too, that this is effected by the very power which constitutes words, and rendered manifest by the same mark, which distinguishes words from mere syllables, it ought to strike us with admiration. It is a maxim in mechanicks that the fewer and simpler the principles are by which any machine is constructed to answer its end, the better; and the same will hold here.

BUT in the manner of distinguishing words from syllables by longer pauses at their end, it will be extremely difficult, as was before observed, to keep a due proportion in that way. Some will be apt to run their words too close together, and so reduce them to the state of syllables: Or they will make the pauses too long, which may confound the sense, take up much unnecessary time in discourse, and produce a tediousness very disgusting to the ear. But supposing that a due medium could be observed, which is scarce possible at best, and in general is utterly impossible, this method of distinguishing words, must, in its own nature, prevent any regular proportion of time being settled, in the delivery of such a language. For as the time of the pause must be equal at the end of each word, and as words are constituted of different numbers of syllables, the distance of those pauses from each other must depend wholly upon the inequality of the words which compose the sentences, and therefore never can be reduced to any certain proportion. If for instance, a  
word



word of two syllables is followed by a monosyllable, and that by a word of five syllables, all of the same length; the distance of time between the first verbal pause and the second, will be as two to one; and the distance of time between the second and third, will be as one to five; and out of such unequal and uncertain proportions, nothing harmonious can be produced.

ANOTHER reason, against using this method of distinguishing words from syllables by final pauses, is, that pauses or stops of the voice, are chiefly used to point out the connection and dependance which words have on each other, by dividing sentences into different members, according to their connection, and marking that connection by different lengths of pauses. Now if the same method is taken to distinguish words from each other, as is used to distinguish the different members of sentences, it will hardly be possible to hinder their interests from clashing, and producing confusion in the meaning. And as the making ourselves clearly understood, is the chief end of speech, the article of perceptible pauses, or the stops of the voice, so essentially necessary to that end, should be applied to that use only.

As there are but the three ways before mentioned by which words can be distinguished, either one, or more of them must be adopted, by all who aim at any regularity of utterance. If more than one way be introduced, it will breed confusion, and it will be impossible to settle any due proportion. In the French language, I mean in the public delivery of it, where they aim at regularity, all three are used on different occasions. Sometimes words are distinguished by perceptible pauses; sometimes by accents; sometimes by tones. This promiscuous use of them is subversive of all harmony, and takes off from the several powers of each in their distinct provinces. Where a language abounds in words composed of syllables equally long, they

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must



must appear to be equally accented, and nothing can distinguish them in that case but verbal pauses, or tones; the inconvenience of the former has been already laid open, and if the latter are not settled by a musical scale, so far as they prevail, they must render the sound of the language discordant to the ear. Accent as a sure mark of distinction, can only take place in such words as are composed of short syllables, or of one long and the rest short. This may be seen in every word of the English language composed of more syllables than one; as no vowel ever has its full long sound unless it be accented. Thus in the word admire the *i* in the last syllable being accented has its full long sound; but when by the addition of a syllable the seat of the accent is changed, as in ad'm rable, the *i* is changed to a short one. The best way of seeing clearly the difference between the genius of the French tongue and ours in this respect, will be to sound a number of words immediately borrowed from them, and see in what the diversity of pronunciation consists. Such as ābāndōn āban'dōn, cōmbāt com'bāt, cōllēge col'lēge, cōmmūn com'mōn, cōmpānion compan'ion, Eūrōpe Eūrōpe, ōbstācle ob'stāclē, sōlide sol'id, Dōctēūr Doc'tōr, fāveūr fāvōūr, hōnēūr hon'ōūr, &c. in most of which words the syllables are all long in the French, and short in the English, as the accents are placed on the vowels in the French and on the consonants in the English. This it is which makes most of their words appear to an English ear to have as many accents as syllables, by obliging them to give an equal stress to them. And this would be our case also, even with the short sound of the vowels, if we were to rest an equal time upon each syllable, as they do: For instance, if instead of aban'dōn we should say á-ban'-dōn, for com'bat com'-bāt, for com'mon com'-mōn. But this amongst us would be evidently not pronouncing words, but syllables only, as children do when learning to spell. The essence of English words consisting in accent, as that of syllables in articulation. We know that there are



as many syllables as we hear articulate sounds, and as many words as we hear accents. So that if any one places two equal accents, on the same word, it sounds to our ear like two words. As if we should say *fortúne* instead of *fortúne*; *nátúre* for *nátúre*; *hor'rou's* for *hor'rou's*, *bat'tlemént* for *batt'lemént*, &c. Whoever will attend to this point, will find, that nothing is more common in public speakers, but particularly those of the stage, than to commit this fault; and in this the peculiarity, of what is called theatrical pronunciation, chiefly consists. Nor can there be a greater fault in pronunciation than this, as it is an offence against the constitution of our tongue; against the fundamental rule upon which the very essence of our words depends; and which is so universal, that there is not a single exception to it, in our whole language, when the words are properly pronounced.

SINCE therefore it must be allowed, that in point of utility, that method of distinguishing words from syllables, which is shortest, clearest, and most constant (that is which admits of the fewest exceptions) is the best, I have already shewn that all these qualities belong to accent. It is shortest, because it renders all other syllables short, which need only be articulated and not dwelt upon; and because it puts an end to the necessity of verbal pauses, which need be no longer than the syllabic, the accent alone sufficiently distinguishing words. It is clearest, because the distinction must be obvious to every one, who knows what an accent is, and he can never mistake or doubt. And it is most constant, for it never admits of an exception, as every word has an accent.

AND as to harmony, or the settling the quantity, or proportion of syllables to each other, in order to produce metrical feet, there could not be devised a more easy, clear, or certain method, than that of doing it by the very same rule, which points out the distinc-



tion of words ; so that he who is master of the one, of course becomes master of the other. When we reflect too, that this is the source from which is derived the plenty of short syllables, yet in a proportional ratio to the long ones, in which respect all modern languages (our own excepted) are so defective, as either to be wholly incapable of numbers, or but ill adapted to them ; and that by the variety of the seat of accent, our words easily and naturally fall into all sorts of metrical feet, it must be acknowledged that in point of beauty and elegance, we have as great advantage over other tongues, by means of our use of the accent, as we have in shortness and distinctness.

NOR is this all ; for by means of accent, the times of pauses also are rendered quicker, and their proportions more easily to be adjusted, and observed. Verbal pauses becoming unnecessary, the sentential only take place ; it follows of course, that the smallest sentential pause, need not be longer than what would be necessary to a verbal one ; and consequently one half less than where the others are used : for where verbal pauses take place, the smallest sentential pause, to make a proportional distinction of the one from the other, must be the double of the verbal one, and the rest follow in that proportion ; which must occasion a dull and disgusting tediousness. For pauses having no real beauty in themselves, like tones, and being used thro' necessity only, in order to make the sense more clear, can not be too short, provided they fully answer that end ; therefore the measure of the smallest pause, should be its manifest perceptibility ; all additional time beyond this, being unnecessary. And as the only beauty, which can arise from pauses, must depend upon a due observation of proportion in their duration, according as the different members which compose a sentence require ; the fewer in number the pauses are, the easier will it be to observe that proportion. Now where sentential pauses only take place, they will be but four in number,



number, as the comma, semicolon, colon, and full stop. But if the verbal pause be admitted, there will be five, and a much more difficult ratio introduced as I have already shewn. Besides, as was before observed, where verbal pauses take place, it is impossible any regular proportion of time can be observed, words being formed of such different and unequal numbers of syllables; and over these the composer has no power: But it is not so with regard to sentential pauses; for as the construction of periods, or verses, and their different members, depend wholly upon the will of the composer, it is in his power to make such a proportional ratio of the stops, as always to produce harmony.

THUS far then no language can appear to be built upon simpler, easier, or more regular principles. All our thoughts are communicated in sentences; sentences are composed of words and pauses; words are made up of syllables, and syllables of letters. Sound is the essence of letters, articulation of syllables, accent of words, and collections of words united by emphasis and divided by proper pauses, of sentences. And accent at the same time that it constitutes words, settles their quantity, and prepares the way for due and proportional pauses. Thus words, considered as the marks of our ideas, in the nature of coin, come from the mint with the clearest and plainest stamp; and are fitted in the best manner, for a ready and brisk circulation, in the commerce of discourse. I shall now conclude this head with a few practical rules for the strict observation of the laws of accent; the necessity of which, I hope, is by this time apparent to all my hearers.

ALL persons who pronounce English words properly, of course lay the accent right, as that is part of pronunciation; and never fail to do so in conversation. But many, when they come to read or  
7 speak



Speak in public, transgress the rules of accent. This arises from a mistaken notion in some, that words are rendered more distinct to a large assembly, by dwelling longer upon the syllables which compose them; and in others, that it adds to the pomp and solemnity of public declamation, in which they think every thing ought to be different from private discourse. This has been chiefly the vice of the stage, and has principally given rise to the distinction of what is commonly called Theatrical Declamation, in opposition to that of the natural kind; into an imitation of which many public speakers have been betrayed, and their manner called on that account Theatrical. Upon examination it would appear, that it arises chiefly from their dwelling upon syllables that are unaccented, thro' a notion that it makes the words move more slow, stately, and uniform, than the quicker and more spirited accents will allow. This was a fault which Shakespear complained of in his time, and which has not been thoroughly amended since; tho' there have been some late efforts towards it, and some progress made in it. The passage alluded to in Shakespear is in the advice given to the player by Hamlet; where in laying down rules for a just delivery, he says, 'Speak the speech  
' I pray you as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but  
' if you mouth it, as some of our actors do, I had as lieve the town-  
' crier spoke my lines.' By 'trippingly on the tongue,' he means the bounding from accent to accent; tripping along from word to word, without resting on syllables by the way. And by mouthing, is meant, dwelling upon syllables that have no accent, and ought therefore to be uttered as quickly as is consistent with distinct articulation; or prolonging the sounds of the accented syllables, beyond their due proportion of time. The least degree of faultiness in this respect, gives an artificial air to language; inasmuch as it differs from the usual, and what is commonly called, natural manner of utterance; and is on that account, of all others, to be avoided most by public speakers;



speakers; whose business it is industriously to conceal art: And chiefly by players, whose office it is, in Shakespear's phrase, 'to hold, as it were, a mirrour up to nature.' It is true this vice does not prevail so much at present, as it has done in the memory of many persons now living; when it was thought an impropriety, to have any thing resembling real life, in the representation of Tragedy; when men were neither to walk nor speak like human creatures; and had '*neither the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christians, Pagans or men.*' Some indeed may say, like the player in Hamlet, 'we hope we have reformed that indifferently amongst us;' to whom I should reply in Hamlet's words, 'O reform it altogether;' and give the same earnest advice to all public speakers whatsoever; not only, on account of the artificial air before-mentioned which it gives to the utterance, but also as it changes the very genius of our tongue, and deprives it of that great source of distinctness, and proportion, which I have before explained. If any one pronounces the words fór-túne, in'-croac'h-men't, con'-jéctúre, gráti-túde, tómorrów, hap'pinéss, patien'ce; he does not utter words, at least not English words, but syllables; which with us, are always tied together by an accent; as, for'tune, incroáchment, conjec'ture, grat'itude, tomor'row, hap'piness, pátiencie. And yet, this is an errour, which almost all persons who speak with solemnity, run into, for want of knowing in what, true solemnity of delivery consists. Which, tho' it may demand a slower utterance than usual, yet, requires that the same proportion in point of quantity be observed in the syllables, as there is in musical notes, when the same tune is played in quicker or slower time. But of this I shall have occasion to speak more at large hereafter.

THE only rule, with regard to this head, necessary to be observed by all public speakers, who can pronounce English properly, is to lay the accent always on the same syllable, and the same letter of the syllable,



lable, which they usually do in common discourse, and to take care not to lay any accent or stress, upon any other syllable. A rule so plain and easy, that nothing but affectation, or bad habits, contracted from imitating others, can prevent its always taking place. And yet the want of knowing, or attending to this rule, is one of the chief sources, of the unnatural manner of declaiming, which is so generally complained of, tho' few can tell exactly where the fault lies.

I SHALL only add upon this head, that there are few things in our language, so regular, and well settled, as the article of accent. It is true there are some words that have occasioned many disputes about the seat of the accent, and have had their different partisans; such as con'cordance or concor'dance, ref'ractory or refrac'tory, cor'ruptible or corrup'tible, accen'ted or ac'cented; the accenting of these being doubtful, every man is at liberty to choose which he likes best; and in giving the preference, the ear beyond all doubt ought to be consulted, as to that which forms the most agreeable sound, rather than an absurd, pedantic rule, attempted to be laid down, that of throwing the accent as far back as possible; which has no foundation in the genius of our tongue, and must frequently produce the most discordant sounds. And if any one who has the liberty of choosing, should prefer the sound of con'cordance, to concórdance; ref'ractory to refrac'tory, or cor'ruptible to corrup'tible; he can not possibly make any one form a better opinion of his judgment, but I am sure he will give those who have any skill in sounds, a very bad one of his ear.



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## LECTURE IV.

### Of EMPHASIS.

**H**AVING treated of Accent, I now proceed to consider the next head, that of Emphasis.

EMPHASIS, discharges in sentences, the same kind of office, that accent does in words. As accent, is the link which ties syllables together, and forms them into words; so emphasis, unites words together, and forms them into sentences, or members of sentences. As accent, dignifies the syllable on which it is laid, and makes it more distinguished by the ear than the rest; so emphasis, ennobles the word to which it belongs, and presents it in a stronger light to the understanding. Accent, is the mark which distinguishes words from each other, as simple types of our ideas, without reference to their agreement or disagreement: Emphasis, is the mark which points out their several degrees of relationship, and the rank which they hold in the mind. Accent, addresses itself to the ear only; emphasis, thro' the ear, to the understanding. Were there no accents, words would be resolved into their original syllables: Were there no emphasis, sentences would be resolved into their original words; and in this case, the hearer must be at the pains himself, first, of making out the words, and afterwards, their meaning: And as this



could not be done, without such length of pauses, at the end of sentences, and their several members, as would allow him time to revolve in his memory, the sounds which had been uttered, it would make the action of listening to discourse laborious and disgustingly tedious. Whereas by the use of accent and emphasis, Words, and their meaning, being pointed out by certain marks, at the same time that they are uttered, the hearer has all trouble saved, but that of listening; and can accompany the speaker at the same pace that he goes, with as clear a comprehension of the matter offered to his consideration, as the speaker himself has, if the speaker delivers himself well.

THE necessity of observing propriety of emphasis is so great, that the true meaning of words, can not be conveyed without it. For the same individual words, ranged in the same order, may have several different meanings, according to the placing of the emphasis. Thus, to use a trite instance, the following sentence may have as many different meanings, as there are words in it, by varying the emphasis. 'Shall you ride to town to-morrow? If the emphasis is on shall, as, shall you ride to town to-morrow? it implies, that the person spoken to had expressed before such an intention, but that there is some doubt in the questioner, whether he be determined on it or not, and the answer may be, 'Certainly, or, I am not sure. If it be on you, as, shall you ride to town to-morrow? the question implies that some one is to go, and do you mean to go yourself, or send some one in your stead? and the answer may be, No, but my servant shall. If on ride, as, shall you ride, &c. the answer may be, No, I shall walk, or go in a coach. If on tow'n, as shall you ride to tow'n to-morrow, the answer may be, No, but I shall ride to the forest. If on to-morrow, as, shall you ride to town to-morrow, the answer may be, No, not to-morrow, but the next day.



As there is no pointing out the very meaning of the words by reading, without a proper observation of emphasis, it surely has been a great defect in the art of writing, that there have been no marks invented for so necessary a purpose; as it requires at all times, a painful attention in the reader to the context, in order to be able to do it at all; and in many cases, the most severe attention will not answer the end; for the emphasis is often to be regulated, not by the preceding part of the sentence, but by the subsequent one; which frequently is so long, that the motion of the eye, can not precede the voice, with sufficient celerity, to take in the meaning in due time. The want of such marks is no where so strongly perceived as in the general manner of reading the Church Service; which is often so ill performed, that not only the beauty, and spirit of the service is lost, but the very meaning is obscured, concealed, or wholly perverted. I have heard many clergymen, who did not read one single sentence as it should be, from the beginning to the end; but I have known few who were not guilty of many faults in omitting, or misplacing the emphasis. And on this account it is, that there is no composition in the English tongue, which is at all attended to, so little understood, in general, as the Church Service. This would be obvious to any one, who would enter into a serious examination of the meaning of the service, and compare it with the manner in which it is usually delivered. Instances of impropriety might be furnished in abundance thro'out the whole, but to give a few even at the first setting out, I mean in some of the verses from Scripture, that are read before the exhortation. Upon examining their true meaning, my hearers will judge whether they have ever heard that meaning expressed in the delivery. The usual manner of reading the following text is this:

ENTER no't into judgement with thy ser'vant, O Lord, for in thy sight, shall no man living be jus'tified.



HERE the words *no't*, *ser'vant*, *s'ight*, *jus'tified*, between which it is impossible to find out any connection, or dependance of one on the other, are principally marked. By these false emphases the mind is turned wholly from the main purport, and drift of the verse. Upon hearing an emphasis on the particle *no't*, it expects quite another conclusion to make the meaning consistent; and instead of the particle *for*, which begins the latter part of the sentence, it would expect a *but*; as, enter *no't* into judgement with thy servant, O Lord, *but* regard me with an eye of mercy. When it hears the emphasis on *ser'vant*, it expects another conclusion; as, enter not into judgement with thy *ser'vant*, O Lord, but enter into judgement with those who are not thy servants. The same also will be found in the emphases on the words *s'ight*, and *justified*. So that the sentence will seem to point at several different meanings, and to have no consistency. But if it be read in the following manner, the meaning and connection will be obvious. Enter not into judgement with thy servant" O Lord" for in thy *s'ight*, shall no man living be justified. Here we see the whole meaning is obvious, and that there is a great deal more implied, than the mere words could express, without the aid of proper emphases. Enter not into judgement with thy servant, O Lord—That is, enter not, O Lord, into the severity of judgement with thy creature,—For in thy *s'ight*,—which is all-piercing and can spy the smallest blemish—shall no man living be justified—No man on earth, no not the best shall be found perfect, or sufficiently pure, to stand the examination, of the eye of purity itself.—For in thy *s'ight* shall no man living be justified. Upon this sentence thus pronounced, the following beautiful passage in Job may be a comment.

How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth



eth not; yea the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm; and the son of man, which is a worm.

THE following verse is generally pronounced in a manner equally faulty.

IF we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

“ IF we say that we have no sin”—Here by laying the strong emphasis on the word *say* we are led to a wrong meaning, as if we only said it with our lips, but did not think so. How then can the conclusion follow of deceiving ourselves? We may deceive others by saying what is false, but it is only by thinking falsely we can deceive ourselves. Which is the true meaning of the words properly pronounced. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves—That is, If there be any amongst us, so vainly blind to their own faults, as to imagine they are without sin, they deceive themselves. This sentence is not an affirmative one, but conditional. It does not say that there are any such amongst us, but, *If* there be any such; and therefore the conditional particle *If*, is in this case emphatical. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves—and the truth is not in us. Here is another fault committed in laying the emphasis on the words *in us* only, whilst the word *truth*, which is the important one, is slightly passed over. And the truth is not in us. That is the opinion entertained of ourselves is false. This strong emphasis laid only on the words *in us*, is the more unpardonable in those who lay such an emphasis on the word *say*, because it by no means follows that the truth is not in us, because we say otherwise; a man may think the truth, and say the contrary; and this very phrase proves the meaning of the text as before explained, that it relates to thinking,



thinking, not saying; as it expressly says the truth is not *in* us, that is we *think* falsely.

“BUT if we confess our sins”——Here again the false emphasis is laid on the word *sins*, whilst the principal circumstance that of confessing our sins is slightly passed over. But if we confess our sins,—that is, if upon a thorough self-examination, after having discovered our sins, we make an humble acknowledgement of them, with a contrite heart, filled with penitence, and a thorough desire and intention of reforming; (for all this is implied in the word confess, as no other sort of confession can be of any avail towards obtaining the consequential grace promised from it). How emphatical therefore ought this word to be which implies so much!

THERE is another word in this sentence which is hurried over as if it were a mere particle, when in this place it is a word of strong import, I mean the word *but*. It is usually read, *büt* if we confess our sins, as if it were a mere disjunctive particle. Whereas *but* in this situation stands in the place of the words, *on the other hand*, as may be seen by reading the two members of the sentence and uniting them by those words.

IF we say, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; on the other hand, if we confess our sins——

BUT——therefore standing in the place of words, should be made emphatical, as all particles are when they are substituted in the place of words.

BUT, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins——Who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins? Could  
any



any one conceive that it is the great God of the Universe, who is here spoken of in so slight a way. Thro'out the whole service indeed the awful name of God is treated so familiarly, and so little distinguished even from any particle of three letters, as must give great offence to pious ears. It is said of the great Robert Boyle, that he never mentioned the name of God, even in private discourse, without making a perceptible pause after it. How much more would this practice become those who are engaged in the solemn act of public worship, and how much would it add to the solemnity of that worship? In this particular text, some peculiar manner of distinguishing the relative, which stands for the name of God, is more essentially necessary, because his name was not before mentioned, and the sentence can not even be made sense without it. The pronoun *He*, should therefore be made very emphatical, and both be preceded, and succeeded by a perceptible pause; at the same time the eyes should be devoutly raised towards heaven, to explain and enforce by the look, what is deficient in the expression. But, if we confess our sins, "*He*" is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, &c. These last words are generally as improperly read as the rest.—The chief emphasis is here also often placed on the word *sins*, which not only marring the sense, but produces a sad cacaphonia, very disagreeable to the ear, by the three successive emphases on the word *sins* in the same sentence. As, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, *He* is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, &c." The want of laying the proper emphases on the word *confess*, in the former part of the sentence, produces the same mistake in not laying it right on the word *forgive* in the latter, as the one is a consequence of the other. If we confess our sins, *He* will forgive our sins.

THE words, *faithful* and *just*, by being hurried over lose their whole force and import. When properly pronounced, there is implied



plied in them by means of emphasis, that God has entered into a covenant with man that upon confession and repentance he will forgive him his sins; his faith and justice therefore are both engaged in the performance of this covenant. He is faithful, and just, to forgive us our sins—and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

HERE the emphasis on the word unrighteousness, is as unfortunately placed, as any of the others. For the emphasis ought to be stronger both on the words cleanse, and all; the meaning of the sentence being, That God, upon our confession and penitence, will not only forgive our sins, but likewise cleanse us, not from unrighteousness only, but from all unrighteousness. He will purify us entirely, so that no taint of our former sins shall remain.

I SHALL now read the text in the two ways, first in the usual manner, and afterwards in what I apprehend to be the right way, in order that the difference may be made more apparent.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Now in the other way.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: But, if we confess our sins, "He" is faithful, and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us, from all unrighteousness.

HAD there been proper marks invented for emphasis, such gross errors could not have been committed. And many passages in authors, are on that account, unintelligible to most readers. To give a remarkable instance of this, in the play of Macbeth. There is a passage which, as it has been generally spoken on the stage, and read



by most people, is downright nonsense; which yet in itself is a very fine one, and conveys an idea truly sublime. I mean an expression of Macbeth's after he has committed the murder, where he says,

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hands? No—these my hands will rather,  
The multitudinous sea incarnardine,  
Making the green one, red.

Now the last line pronounced in that manner, calling the sea, the green one, makes flat nonsense of it. But if we read it with proper emphasis and stop, and say, making the green—o'ne red. Here is a most sublime idea conveyed, that his hands dipped into the sea, would change the colour of the whole ocean from green to red; making the green—o'ne red. Nor, if we consider the disturbed state of his imagination at that time, will this thought, hyperbolical as it may seem at first view, appear at all unnatural. For it is highly probable that his fancy at that instant presented all objects about him as of that sanguine hue; nay converted the very atmosphere that surrounded him, into a sea of blood.

PARTICLES whenever they are emphatical change the meaning of the words from that which belongs to them as pronounced in the common way. Thus if we read this line of Othello in the following manner,

Put out the light, and then, put out the light;

it is nonsense. But by marking the particle *thè* in the repetition of the same words, a new idea and a new meaning is presented to the mind.

Put out the light, and then put out *the* light.

K

That



That is the light of life, put in opposition by force of this emphasis, to the light of the candle.

OR else the emphasis on particles introduces accessory ideas not expressed in the words ; or marks the degrees of emotion better than it could be done otherwise. Of the first we have an instance in these lines of Tamerlane :

Can'st thou believe' thy prophet', or what's more  
That power supreme that made thee' an'd thy prophet.

Under this emphasis on the particle, an'd, is couched the following meaning ; ' this prophet whom thou worshipp'st, and to whom thou pay'st the chief honours, was only a Creature like thyself, made by the same Almighty Being, and subject to the same laws. Of the other we have an instance in this line of Othello :

Perdition catch my soul but I do lo've thee.

This is the usual way of pronouncing that line, by which its peculiar beauty and force is lost. But when it is repeated thus,

Excellent wretch !

Perdition catch my soul but I dō love thee—

the emphasis on dō, marks the vehemence of his affection, much better than any emphasis on the verb love could. For when the emphasis is laid on the verb love, *do*, becomes a mere expletive, being an unnecessary sign of the present tense. But when an emphasis is placed on *do*, it becomes an auxiliary verb, signifying an act of the strongest affirmation.

EMPHASIS is of two kinds ; simple or complex. Simple, when it serves only to point out the plain meaning of any proposition : complex,



plex, when besides the meaning, it marks also some affection or emotion of the mind; or gives a meaning to words, which they would not have in their usual acceptation, without such emphasis. In the former case, emphasis is little more than a stronger accent with but little change of tone; when it is complex, besides force, there is always superadded a manifest change of tone. Simple emphasis belongs to the calm and composed understanding; complex, to the fancy and the passions.

By means of Emphasis what passes in the mind is often shewn in a few words, which otherwise would require great circumlocution. Of which take the following instance from the play of All for Love.

———the fault was mine

To place thee there, where only, Thou, could'st fail.

In this scene Anthony, having found out that his friend Dolabella, whom he had employed on a commission to Cleopatra, instead of discharging the trust reposed in him, had suffered his own passion for that dangerous beauty so far to prevail, as to give up his friend's cause, and urge his own love-suit to her; at first, upbraids Dolabella in the bitterest terms for his treachery. But afterwards when he cools a little, and his affection for his friend begins to revive, he palliates the fault of Dolabella, and takes the blame to himself, by reflecting on the bewitching power of Cleopatra's charms, and that he should not have exposed his friend to a temptation so irresistible. Now let us see how much more there is implied in those words, to be conveyed by the force of emphasis, than could be if the words were uttered without it.

———the fault was mine

To place thee there——



To place thee in so dangerous a situation ; to give you an opportunity of a private interview with a woman of such fascinating charms.

——where on'ly——

The single situation in the world in which

——Thou——

Thou who wert my bosom friend ; thou whose perfect honour and fidelity I have approved thro'out our whole course of friendship on all other occasions—

——couldst fail.

couldst possibly have been found deficient in friendship or in duty.

IT is this latter use of emphasis chiefly that gives life and spirit to discourse, and enables it to produce its noblest effects. By this it is that we have it in our power not only to make others conceive our ideas as we conceive them, but to make them also feel them, as we feel them. By the use of simple emphasis, truths may be conveyed, and the understanding enlightened, if the hearer will be at the pains of commanding his own attention. But by the use of the complex kind, the affections and passions are excited, the fancy agitated, and the attention of the hearer engaged by the delight which accompanies the very act of attending. In the former, the mind is for the most part passive ; a state in which it can not long remain, with satisfaction to itself. In the other its activity is roused, and it is conscious of that activity, without any labour of its own ; which is one of the most agreeable states, that can be conceived, to the human mind, made up as it is of restlessness, and indolence. The mind thus constituted, grows equally weary of an inactive state, or of much labour of its own ; but delights in being exercised at the expence of the labour of others. And this is one of the chief reasons, that dramatic representations,



representations, have ever held the first rank amongst the diversions of mankind, from the effects which those of the best kind produce, as described by Horace :

*pectus inaniter angit,  
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet  
Ut magus, &c.*

And on the same account the powers of oratory are reckoned amongst the noblest that belong to human nature, and productive of the highest delight that the mind can receive. But as the powers of oratory can not be at all exerted without the use of emphasis; nor the passions of the hearers be roused, or their minds interested in what is offered to them, without the use of the complex kind, *what* a pity it is that so little care is taken about so important an article in reading. For the right use of which there is neither any method known, nor rules laid down in our course of education; which is the chief reason that public reading is in general so disgusting, and public speaking so unaffecting. Whereas nothing would be more easy than to instruct children in the most perfect use of emphasis, complex as well as simple, at the same time that they learn to read, and to make the same progress in the one, as in the other. The yet uncorrupt ear, and the flexible organs of speech, would be capable of receiving, distinguishing, and uttering all the variety of tones in their just proportions, in the same manner as in singing; were there but preceptors equally qualified to teach them by rules, examples, and practice.

WITH regard to simple emphasis, it is certain that every man, who clearly comprehends what he says in private discourse, never fails to lay the emphasis on the right word; when therefore he is about to read, or repeat the words of others, or his own, in public,



let him only reflect on the place, where he would lay the emphasis, supposing these words had proceeded from the immediate sentiments of his own mind, in private discourse; and he will have an infallible rule of laying the simple emphasis right, in all sentences, whose meaning he clearly comprehends. This rule is so obvious, and so easy to be observed, that it is astonishing to find every where, both in reading and reciting, such an abuse or neglect of emphasis. But the cause of this is easily explained. In teaching to read by the eye, masters instruct pupils in the use of such marks as are presented to the eye; now as there are no visible signs but letters and stops, and as the words are distinguished from each other, only by a greater distance between them than between the letters which compose them; and the different members of sentences, by little crooked figures; the eye has no assistance in the two most important parts of reading, accent and emphasis; and therefore in those it is, that the chief blunders are committed. It is true, whoever is told that he is always to pronounce his words exactly with the same accent that he speaks them, provided he be master of the right pronunciation, need not have any visible mark to point out the accent; but even this easy rule is so seldom inculcated, that there are few free from errors in this respect; especially when they attempt to read or recite any thing with more than usual solemnity and pomp. But with respect to emphasis, it is impossible to lay it right, unless a man first has clearly comprehended the meaning of what he is about to read; and as this is difficult to be done at sight, after long practice and experience, even by the best readers; nay as it is impossible for them to do it without some errors, and never with the same degree of accuracy, as after a perusal of what they are to read aloud, how much less are we to expect it from such as are learners, even under the best instruction; but least of all from those, who are taught in such a method, as does not make this a necessary part of reading. I appeal



peal to the experience of mankind, whether in general, any thing else be taught, but the pronunciation of words and observation of the stops; and whether any one, who can readily give utterance to all words offered to the eye, and put them together, or separate them, accordingly as the stops direct, does not think himself qualified to read any thing aloud at sight, so as readily to undertake it in the hearing of any persons when called upon? All this arises from a mistake, which men naturally enough fall into, who judge of language only in its written state; that sentences are wholly composed of words and stops, because there are no other visible marks offered to the eye; but the man who considers language in its primary and noblest state, as offered to the ear, will find that the very life and soul of speech, consists in what is utterly unnoticed in writing, in accent and emphasis: And as the man who attempts to pronounce words, without observation of accent, really does not utter words, but syllables; so the man who attempts to pronounce sentences, without emphasis, really does not utter sentences, but words. So that in speech, words are the body; pauses and stops give it shape and form, and distinguish the several parts of the body; but accent and emphasis, are the life, blood, and soul, which put it in motion, and give it power to act. And as nothing can be more tedious to the ear, or irksome to the mind, than a long succession of mere lifeless words, we need not wonder that our public readers and reciters, so instructed, are either so little attended to, or heard with disgust.

I WOULD therefore recommend it to every one, who has any thing to read or recite in public, to reflect in what manner and with what kind of emphasis, he would point out the meaning, if he were to deliver those words, as proceeding from the immediate sentiments of his own mind. With this point in view he can not fail of finding out the words, on which, in that case, he would lay the emphasis.



Let him therefore give a particular mark to those words, such as one of the accents used in Greek; that whenever he reads, he may be put in mind of laying a due stress on them, by those visible marks; otherwise he will be apt, from habit, to fall into his usual manner of reading. And in every recital, when the words are well fixed in the memory, let the chief article of attention be, to lay the stress upon those words only, which he had before so marked. And this I take to be the surest and best way, of counteracting bad habits, arising from the very defective method, in which we are taught and practised in the manner of reading aloud and reciting.

IF it be said, that tho' in reading or reciting the works of others, men may be apt to make mistakes in the article of emphasis, yet when they deliver compositions of their own, or speak their extemporaneous sentiments in public, it is impossible they can be guilty of any such error, I believe upon examination the matter of fact would be found strongly against this opinion. For I have known few authors, and many instances have fallen in my way, who did not read their own compositions, exactly in the same way as they would those of any other writer; excepting perhaps their doing it with more emotion, and thereby rendering any absurdity in their manner the more glaring. And with respect to extemporaneous speaking in public, I have not known many instances in my life in which the artificial manner, got from a bad habit of reading, or imitations of others, has not supplanted the natural manner of speaking; and even in the best, their delivery has in many parts been much affected by it. The man is apt to harangue his fellow citizens, much in the same way, as the boy was accustomed to recite before his school-fellows; unless where nature breaks thro' the force of habit, when the heart of the speaker is much engaged, in his subject, and when he delivers himself wholly from feeling. I have known some instances of this kind  
in



in reciting also on the stage, where the same performers, who in the unimpassioned and declamatory passages of their characters, were generally wrong in laying the emphasis; whenever they entered into the more animated parts, and the passion which they represented took full possession of them, were always right in that article.

If the use of the simple emphasis, which has so plain, general, and certain a rule to point it out, be yet so mistaken, what shall we say to that of the complex kind; which is infinitely more comprehensive, intricate, and difficult; and yet is utterly without either rules, or examples to point out its true use? Tho' this is one of the most important branches of delivery, since the power of animating and affecting the hearers, depends much upon it. As words are marks of ideas, so are tones of energies and affections of the mind; and as we can not make known our ideas to others, without a sufficient number of words, to mark, not only their difference in gross from each other, but also the nicer distinctions of degrees in the same idea, together with their various relations; so can not we manifest, or communicate to others the several feelings of the mind, in conceiving and uttering its ideas, and the various proportions of those feelings, without a suitable number, and equally regular and nice distinction of tones. But here art has entirely deserted us, and left us to guide ourselves as well as we can. And indeed all her exertions seem to have been confined within the bounds of written language, where she has the faithful eye to guide her by sure and fixed marks; nor has she, hitherto amongst us, dared to make any excursions, into the more extensive, and nobler provinces, of spoken language, the ways thro' which are to be found only by the information of the uncertain ear; which if not well instructed, and early cultivated, must ever prove a false guide. Hence it comes to pass, that words, as marks of our ideas, are tolerably well regulated, and



reduced to order; whilst tones, the marks of our feelings, are left wholly to chance. The natural consequence of which has been that many discourses, good in themselves, are pronounced without affecting the hearers; and that in a nation abounding in good writers, a good speaker is a prodigy. But of this I shall have occasion to speak more at large under the head of Tones. At present I shall content myself with closing this head, by laying down the only rule, which appears to me to be of any considerable benefit in practice, towards making the best use that can be as things are now circumstanced, of the complex emphasis. And that is directly the same rule before laid down with regard to the simple emphasis; that every one should content himself with the use of those tones only that he is habituated to in speech, and to give none other to emphasis, but what he would do to the same words in discourse. Thus whatever he utters will be done with ease, and appear natural; whereas if he endeavours at any tones, to which he is not accustomed, either from fancy, or imitation of others, it will be done with difficulty, and carry with it evident marks of affectation and art, which are ever disgusting to the hearer, and never fail to defeat the end of the speaker.

LECTURE



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## LECTURE V.

### Of PAUSES or STOPS.

**T**HE next head of which I am to treat, is that of Pauses, or Stops.

STOPS or pauses, are a total cessation of sound during a perceptible, and in numerous compositions, a measurable space of time. The use of these is equally necessary to the speaker, and to the hearer. To the speaker, that he may take breath, without which he can not proceed far in delivery; and that he may relieve the organs of speech, by these temporary rests, which otherwise would be soon tired by continued and uninterrupted action: To the hearer, that the ear also may be relieved from the fatigue, which it would otherwise endure from a continuity of sound; and that the understanding may have sufficient time to mark the distinction of sentences, and their several members. These pauses being thus necessary and useful, become ornamental also in verse, when reduced to exact proportions of time, in the same way as in music.

BUT as in common discourse, and in most compositions in prose, there is no necessity to observe such nice proportion of pauses, they have besides their duration, marks of a surer kind annexed to them, to point out their nature; and these are, certain notes of the voice, which declare of what kind the pauses are, at the instant they are



made; and inform the mind what it is to expect from them; whether the sense is still to be continued in the same sentence; whether the succeeding one is to be the last member of the sentence; whether more are to ensue; or whether the sentence be closed, and a new one is to begin.

THE great utility of this practice will appear, when we consider how necessary it is that the hearer should be able to accompany the speaker in all that he utters, so as fully to comprehend his meaning; and therefore he should be spared the trouble of attending to any thing else, but his meaning. Now if pauses had no other mark of distinction, but the time of their duration, it is evident that not only the speaker, must always be exceedingly nice, in observing the exactest proportion of time, with regard to the different pauses, (a thing scarce practicable in irregular discourse) but the hearer also, must employ his whole attention, during those pauses, in measuring their exact duration, without which he must mistake their nature; a thing equally impracticable, or which if attempted, must by this distraction of the attention, do great injury to the principal point in view, a full conception of the meaning. Whereas, when the nature or kind of pause, is declared at its beginning, by the sure mark of a note or tone of the voice, it matters not afterwards to the hearer, whether the speaker observes any due proportion of time or not; for he is at that instant prepared to accompany him, whenever he pleases to set out; whether it be suddenly, or whether he chuses to delay longer than is necessary. For he knows by the tone what the pause should be, whether the speaker observes the due proportion of time or not.

IT is true in poetical compositions, the skilful ear will not be satisfied, without a due observation of the proportion of pauses, as well as sounds; but it is because in that case, it has a right to be pleased  
itself,



itself, at the same time that it is the instrument of conveying the meaning to the understanding, and its disgust arises from the disappointment. But the interests of the understanding receive no farther prejudice, the notes or tones still proving sure guides to the sense, than what may arise from want of attention, occasioned by such disgust of the ear.

BUT in all speeches and harangues that are more loose, and free from the fetters of measure, this circumstance has given the speaker such a power over the pauses, as, judiciously used, may contribute much to the main point in view, that of strongly inculcating his meaning. For by this means, he may always proportion his pauses to the importance of the sense, and not merely to the grammatical structure of words in sentences, making like pauses to all of like structure, without distinction. For instance, if there be any proposition or sentiment which he would enforce more strongly than the rest, he may either precede it by a longer pause than usual, which will rouse attention, and give it the more weight when it is delivered; or he may make a longer pause after it is closed, which will give time for the mind to ruminate upon it, and let it sink deeper into it by such reflection; or according to the importance of the point, he may do both. He may go still farther, and make a pause before some very emphatical word, where neither the sense nor common usage would admit of any; but this liberty is to be used with great caution. For as such pauses excite uncommon attention, and of course raise expectation, if the importance of the matter be not fully answerable to such expectation, it will occasion disappointment and disgust. This liberty therefore is to be seldom taken, and never but where something extraordinary and new is offered to the mind, which is likely to be attended with an agreeable surprise. For pauses of this sort put the mind into a state of suspense, which is ever



attended with an uneasy sensation, and for which it will always expect to have compensation made, by a greater degree of pleasure, than it otherwise could have had.

BUT in the use of the tones which mark the pauses, great care must be taken to avoid those two artificial tones, with which every one is taught to read; the bad effects of which I need not now expatiate on, having shewn them at large in my first lecture. And as this is one of the chief sources of the disgusting monotony, and unnatural manner of delivery, which is so generally complained of in our public readers and speakers, too much pains can not be taken to get the better of it. The truth is that the tones which mark the pauses in speaking, have an infinite variety, according to the matter of the discourse, and disposition of mind in the speaker; whereas those in reading, as I shewed before, are reduced to two. I would therefore recommend it to every person who has any thing to deliver in public, to make use of the same rule for his guide with regard to the tones belonging to the stops, as was before laid down with regard to those appertaining to the complex emphasis, and for the same reasons; because he is master of these, he will do it with ease; his delivery will appear natural, and free from all marks of affectation.

By means of these tones that mark the pauses, readers may at any time, when they find it necessary, take breath even at the smallest pause, without prejudice to the sense; as the tone, sufficiently marks the nature of the pause, without reference to time: but in this care is to be taken by the speaker that the true tone be given to the pause at the time it is made, for thus the hearer will have notice that the sentence is not closed, and his attention is only suspended, without perplexing his understanding. And he may have a sure rule for using the true tone, by giving exactly the same one that he would, were

he



he to proceed more quickly to the next member of the sentence, and were not to make a longer stop than ordinary. The want of knowing this circumstance, or rather the false rule by which people are instructed, that the breath is never to be drawn, but when there is a full stop or close of the sense, has made it exceedingly difficult to many to utter long sentences, and impossible to those who are short-winded. They are therefore either apt to run themselves entirely out of breath, (which is always disagreeable, destroying all force and grace) and not to stop 'till necessity obliges them to it from failure of breath; which is therefore likely to happen in improper places: Or else they subdivide the long sentence, into as many distinct sentences, as they make times of breathing, to the utter confusion of the sense. For as they have been taught, not to take breath, but when they make a full stop, they habitually use the tone of a full stop, whenever they take breath. It is of as much importance to a speaker, that he should have at all times a sufficient command of breath, as that an organ should be supplied with a proper quantity of air; nothing therefore can be of more moment to him than the practice of the rule which I have laid down, as it will enable all who do not labour under some great infirmity in point of breathing, to go thro' the longest periods, without any perceptible defect of that kind.

THERE is no article in reading more difficult, than that of observing a due proportion of stops, occasioned by the very erroneous, and inaccurate manner, in which they are marked by printers and writers. Stopping, like spelling, has at different periods of time, and by different persons, been considered in a great measure as arbitrary, and has had its different fashions; and these fashions have been spread, and become general, by being adopted by the printers most in vogue. The art of punctuation is of modern invention, and probably was not known, previous to the discovery of printing; at least



we are sure that the Ancients made not any use of stops in their writing. A plain proof of what I asserted in my first lecture, that the art of writing amongst the Ancients, was not calculated for the use we put it to, of reading works aloud to auditors, but only to enable the speaker to get the words by rote, in order that he might recite them from memory. And happy had it been for the state of modern elocution, that the art had still remained unknown; for then every one who had any thing to deliver in public, must, like the Ancients, have been obliged either to recite it without book, or apply himself closely to study the meaning of what he had to read, so as to be able to deliver it properly. Nor should we then have had those reading tones, before mentioned, which have been annexed to the stops; nor those false pauses and rests of the voice, which have been introduced by false punctuation: But every one, having no rules to misguide him, would of course follow the obvious one, that of reading words as he would speak them.

It is evident that to mark the stops properly in writing, every perceptible cessation of sound in the voice ought to have a mark; but this is far from being the case in the present practice of punctuation, continual instances occurring, where the voice ought to be suspended, without any comma appearing; and instances as frequent, where commas are put down in places, where there ought to be no suspension of the voice. The truth is, the modern art of punctuation was not taken from the art of speaking, which was never studied by the moderns, but was in a great measure regulated by the rules of grammar; that is, certain parts of speech are kept together, and others divided by stops, according to their grammatical construction, often without reference to the pauses used in discourse. And the only general rule by which pauses can be regulated has been either unknown, or unattended to: which is, that pauses in general de-  
pend



pend upon emphasis. I have already shewn that words are sufficiently distinguished from each other by accent; but to point out their meaning when ranged in sentences, emphasis and pauses are necessary. Accent is the link which connects syllables together, and forms them into words; Emphasis is the link which connects words together, and forms them into members of sentences; but that there may be no mistake to which emphasis the words belong, at the end of every such member of a sentence there ought to be a perceptible pause. If it be asked why a pause should be any more necessary to emphasis than to accent, or why emphasis alone will not sufficiently distinguish the members of sentences without pauses, as accent does words from each other; the answer is obvious, that we are pre-acquainted with the sounds of the words, and can not mistake them when distinctly pronounced, however rapidly; but we are not pre-acquainted with the meaning of sentences, which must be pointed out to us by the speaker; and as this can only be done by evidently shewing what words belong to the emphatic one, unless we make a pause at the end of the last word belonging to the former emphatic one, we shall not be able to know at all times whether the intermediate words between two emphatic ones, appertain to the former or the latter; which must breed a perpetual confusion in the sense. This will be sufficiently illustrated by two of the examples given in my former upon Emphasis; for in the line quoted from Macbeth, had they placed a comma at the end of the word *green*, as thus—

*Making the green, one red—*

the sense could not have been mistaken. And had they placed three commas in the line quoted from All for Love, as thus—

*To place thee there, where only, thou, couldst fail—*

the full import of the passage would have been at once perceived.

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Whoever



Whoever therefore has a mind to read any piece correctly, must stop according to this rule. Let him first find out and mark each emphatic word ; then let him examine what number of words belong to that emphatic one, and at the last of those let him place a comma, or such other stop as the sense requires. The tones appertaining to these pauses, and the time taken up in them must be left to his own judgement ; and his best rule will be to reflect what tones he would use, and what time he would suspend his voice, were he to speak them as his own immediate sentiments. And whoever reads any thing at sight, would do well to pay as little regard to the stops as possible, and be chiefly attentive to the meaning of the words.

#### Of the PITCH and MANAGEMENT of the VOICE.

THE next points I am to treat of, are the pitch and management of the voice ; articles of the utmost importance to give due force and proportion to all the others. To the being heard with satisfaction, it is necessary that the speaker should deliver himself with ease. But if he does not know how to pitch his voice properly, he can never have the due management of it ; and his utterance will be painful to himself, and irksome to his hearers.

EVERY speaker who is not corrupted by bad habit, has three pitches in his voice, the high, low, and middle pitch. The middle pitch is that which is used in ordinary discourse, from which he either rises or falls according as the matter of his discourse, or emotions of his mind require. This middle pitch therefore is what ought to be generally used, for two reasons ; first, because the organs of the voice are stronger, and more pliable in this pitch, from constant use : And secondly, because it is more easy to rise or fall from that pitch, to high or low, with regular proportion.

Most



MOST persons, thro' want of skill and practice, when they read or speak in public, fall into one of the extremes. Either thro' timidity and diffidence they use the low pitch, in which they are not heard at all, or with so much trouble to the listner, as soon to weary attention : or if they aim at avoiding this fault, they run into the high pitch ; which is productive of consequences equally bad. The organs of the voice, in this unusual pitch, are soon wearied, and languor and hoarseness ensue. And as the reason for continuing it, will be equally strong during the whole discourse, as for the first setting out in it, the speaker must lose all the benefits which arise from variety, and fall into a disgusting monotony.

THE prevalence of this practice arises from a common mistake in those who speak for the first time in a large room, and before a numerous auditory. They conclude it impossible that they should be heard in their common pitch of voice, and therefore change it to a higher. Thus they confound two very distinct things, making high and low, the same with loud and soft. Loud and soft in speaking, is like the *forte* and *piano* in music, it only refers to the different degrees of force used in the same key : whereas high and low imply a change of key. A man may speak louder or softer in the same key ; when he speaks higher or lower, he changes his key. So that the business of every one is to proportion the force or loudness of voice, to the room, and number of his auditory, in its usual pitch. If it be larger than ordinary, he is to speak louder, not higher ; in his usual key, not in a new one. And whoever neglects this, will never be able to manage his voice with ease to himself, or pleasure to his hearers.

IT is evident that he who begins in the high pitch on a supposition that he could not otherwise be heard, must for the same



reason continue in that pitch throughout. And they who set out under this delusion are apt to continue in it all their lives, having but little chance of being informed of their error. So that whenever they deliver any thing in public they of course fall into this unnatural key.

THIS error is no where more observable than in the usual manner of reading Divine Service. The unnatural pitch of voice, is the first thing that strikes every judicious ear, in the first sentence the clergyman utters, which is continued throughout; nor have I heard many in my life who read the Service in their own proper pitch. The quantity of sound, necessary to fill even a large space, is much smaller than is generally imagined; and to the being well heard, and clearly understood, a good and distinct articulation, contributes more, than power of voice. Possessed of that, a man with a weak voice, has infinite advantages over the strongest without it. If the voice be weak, and the articulation good, the attention and silence of the auditory will be proportionally greater, that they may not miss any thing that is said; whereas they are under no such apprehensions from a loud speaker. He who delivers himself in a moderate pitch, whenever his subject demands that he should rise to a higher, or sink to a lower, does it with ease and due proportion; and produces the effects which are to be expected from such change, and agreeable variety. Whilst he who takes a high pitch, can not rise upon occasion without running into discord, nor sink with any rule of proportion to guide him. They who to avoid this fault run into the opposite extreme, and begin in a lower pitch than is natural to them, err indeed of the safer side, but are equally distant from the point of truth. It is true it is more easy to rise gradually and proportionally than to descend; but whilst they remain in that key, it will appear equally unnatural, and more languid than the other.

And



And they will be very apt thro' the body of their discourse, to run chiefly into that key, in which they had set out. The true, safe, and sure rule (unless upon extraordinary occasions indeed) is always to begin in your usual pitch of speaking; if that should not prove strong enough, strengthen it by practice; if there be such a natural weakness in the organs as that you can not be heard in public assemblies in that pitch, you had better give over all thoughts of appearing in them; or if your profession obliges you to it, you must give up all hopes of speaking gracefully, and agreeably, or even intelligibly. For he who is obliged to strain his voice, in order to be heard, will scarce articulate well. The office of articulation is of a very delicate nature, and requires that the organs which perform it, should not be disturbed, or suffer any violence; which must always be the case when the voice is pushed out upon them with uncommon force. I have known instances of persons with very strong voices, of whom in their utmost exertions of them, it has been very justly observed, that there was no hearing what they said, they spoke so loud; for the torrent of the voice, left neither time nor power in the organs, to shape the words properly, but bore away with it clustered and uncouth masses of abortive syllables.

THE best rule for a speaker to observe is, never to utter a greater quantity of voice, than he can afford without pain to himself, or any extraordinary effort. Whilst he does this, the other organs of speech will be at liberty to discharge their several offices with ease; and he will always have his voice under command. But whenever he transgresses these bounds, he gives up the reins, and has no longer any management of it. And it will ever be the safest way too, to keep within his compass, rather than go at any time to the utmost extent of it; which is a dangerous experiment, and never justifiable but upon some extraordinary emotion. For even in that case, the  
transgressing



transgressing the limits in the least, (difficult as the task is for a speaker to keep within bounds, when under the influence of such emotion) will scarce be pardoned: For, as the judicious Shakespear has well observed in his instructions to the player, '*In the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.*' For the same reason also, every speaker should take care in the management of the breath, always to get a fresh supply before he feels any want of it; for whilst he has some to spare, he recruits it with such ease, that his hearers are not at all sensible of his doing it. Whereas if he waits 'till he is put in mind of it by any degree of uneasiness, he not only does it with more difficulty to himself, but he may depend upon it that his hearers also have felt his uneasiness, and been sensible of his difficulty. For so strong is the sympathy between the organs of speech, and those of hearing, that the least uneasiness in the one, is immediately perceived by the other.

I SHALL close my observations on this head with two rules; one, for giving strength and power to the voice in its natural pitch. The other for adjusting the proper quantity or degree of loudness in the voice, proportioned to the size of the room and the number of the auditory. The first rule for strengthening the voice, is this. Any one, who thro' habit, has fallen into a weak utterance, can not hope suddenly to change it; he must do it by degrees and constant practice. I would therefore recommend it to him, that he should daily exercise himself in reading, or repeating in the hearing of a friend; and that too in a large room. At first his friend should stand at such a distance only, as the speaker can easily reach, in his usual manner of delivering himself. Afterwards let him gradually increase his distance, and the speaker will in the same gradual proportion increase the force of the voice; for the method of increasing by degrees is easy in this



as in every thing else, when sudden transitions are impracticable; and every new acquisition of power, enables you the better to go on to the next degree. When he shall have thus got to that distance, beyond which the speaker can not be heard without straining, and forcing his voice, there let him stop; and let that be the usual place of his standing to hear the most part of what is declaimed; because when the speaker, is able by practice to manage his voice in that extent, he will certainly be able to command it in all the inferior degrees. Tho' for the more gradual unfolding of the organs, and regular increase of the quantity of the voice, it will be always right for the hearer to begin at each day's exercise with the shortest distance, and increase it by degrees till he arrives at the utmost; in which situation, for the reason before assigned, the chief part of the exercise ought to be performed.

THE second rule for giving a proper degree of loudness, or issuing a sufficient quantity of voice proportioned to the room and the audience, which is commonly called pitching the voice, is this. Let the speaker after having looked round the assembly, fix his eyes on that part of his auditory which is farthest from him, and he will mechanically endeavour to pitch his voice so as that it may reach them. This is what we constantly practice in common discourse, for we always proportion the loudness or softness of voice, to the distance of the person to whom we are speaking. When the speaker therefore shall have fixed his eye upon the most distant part of his audience, his business is to consider himself as addressing his discourse to some one amongst them, in such a manner as that he may be heard by him, and if the person be not beyond the reach of his voice, he will not fail to effect it. But still he is to take care not to change his usual pitch in order to do this, but only to add force or

5 degrees



degrees of loudness in proportion to the distance. This is what we do in life when we call after any person to come back ; we add loudness to our voice according to the distance he has got from us, but we never change the key, or bawl, till we find that he has got so far, as that his ear can not be reached by the natural pitch of our voice. He therefore who sets out in a higher key than is natural to him, in order that he may be heard by the most distant, may be justly said to bawl out his discourse, but not to deliver it.

THERE is another material circumstance to be attended to in pitching the voice, which arises from the construction of the room in which you are to speak ; some being admirably contrived for the purpose of speaking, and others quite the contrary. Of course in the former, a much smaller quantity of voice will do, than in the latter. The first object of every speaker, ought to be to find out whether his voice can fill the room or not ; and afterwards to proportion the quantity of it accordingly. By filling a room with the voice is meant, when there is such a quantity of it uttered, as not only will reach the extremities, but return also to the speaker. And a room may be said to be well constructed for speaking when this is effected by a moderate exertion of a common voice. The two extremes are when either a room thro' its size, or ill construction, will admit of no reverberation, or when the reverberation is made by an echo. I shall endeavour to find out what is best to be done in the three cases. In the first case when the speaker can fill the room with his voice, his business is to find out what quantity will be sufficient to do it ; that he may neither unnecessarily waste his voice by throwing out too much, nor diminish his power by using too little ; but that he may have a perfect command and management of it, according to the different degrees of exertion, which may be



be required in the different parts of his discourse. The best way of finding this out, will be, to begin with a moderate quantity of voice, and to increase it gradually, till the speaker finds out the degree of loudness, that is necessary to fill the room; which will be discovered to him by the return of the sound to his own ear, as soon as he has arrived at the proper pitch. With this degree or quantity of voice he is to deliver all the more forcible, spirited, and impassioned parts of his discourse. For tho' he may be distinctly heard with a smaller exertion, yet it will not be in a manner so satisfactory to the hearer. Every speaker therefore in a well constructed room, which is not too large for his powers, may have an infallible criterion by which to judge of that point, as he may be sure that he has filled the ears of his auditory, when he has filled the room; and he may certainly know when he has filled the room, by the return of his voice to his own ear. This is one of the most valuable pieces of management that a public speaker can possess, and of which, with due attention, and a little practice, he may easily become master. This rule is on a supposition that the room is so constructed as to return the sound gently and equably, without any perceptible echo.

BUT in the second case where the sound is suddenly reverberated by an echo, the difficulty to the speaker is much increased. Nothing is more apt to mislead the unwary and unskillful speaker, than this circumstance in a room; for as his voice sounds much louder to himself on that account, he is apt to conclude that he is the better heard; whereas the very thing which adds to the loudness, destroys articulation and distinction of utterance, which are essentially necessary to the being understood. For the quick and sudden reverberation of the sounds which have been uttered, makes such a jumble with those which are uttering, that the whole appears a confused babble of something like words indeed, but utterly unintelligible.



In the former case, when the room is well constructed for speaking, the return of the voice is made in a moderate and equable manner; in the latter, it rebounds like a tennis-ball. In the first case, the undulation of sound resembles the circles made in a smooth water by the gentle dropping in of a pebble, where all gradually increase in their circumference, and are regular in their figures: the other resembles the motion of the water when a stone is dashed violently into it, where all is irregular and confused. Nothing can shew the ignorance which prevails in the art of speaking in this age in a stronger light than this very circumstance; for there have been few rooms built for the purpose of speaking, in which the contrivers have not endeavoured by artificial means to procure as strong an echo as possible, in order to assist the speaker, when it is of all others the greatest hindrance to him. Whoever therefore has the misfortune to be under a necessity of speaking in a room of that sort, has no remedy but this. He must lessen the quantity of his voice 'till he finds no perceptible echo. It is true this will put it out of his power to exert himself, but all he can hope for in such circumstances is to be heard and understood; energy he must wholly give up, at least it must be confined to very small degrees.

THERE is another kind of echo in some rooms, which does not suddenly reverberate the sounds, but takes up some interval of time. Here the speaker must take care to be much slower, and distinct in his utterance than usual, and to make his pauses longer. He is to attend to the returning sound, and not to begin after a pause till the sound is ceased.

THE third case is, when a room is so large or so ill constructed, that the voice of the speaker is lost, before it reaches the extremities, or so far spent, that it has not force enough to return to him. There  
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are many enormous buildings of this kind, such as the old abbeys, cathedrals, and halls, in which the speaker has no more advantage from being covered, than if he were in the open air. The only rule the speaker has here, is what was first mentioned, that of fixing his eyes on the most distant part of his auditory, and endeavouring to make himself heard by them in his natural compass; but if that can not be, he is to deliver himself to the rest with as much force of voice as he can use without straining. Beside those which have been already mentioned, there are some rooms too spacious to make any return of the voice from the extremities, which yet have, from the hollownefs of the ground underneath, a strong echo. This is the case in many of our cathedrals. Whatever speaker has the misfortune to be obliged to deliver himself in one of these, has nothing for it, but to submit to necessity, and to get thro' his work as well as he can.







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## LECTURE VI.

### T O N E S.

**T**HUS far, I have considered the several points, that are fundamentally, and essentially necessary, to every public speaker; without which, he will be so far from making any impression on his hearers, that he will not be able to command their attention, nor, in many cases, even make himself understood.

YET so low is the state of elocution amongst us, that a man who is master even of these rudiments of rhetoric, is comparatively considered, as one of an excellent delivery. This very circumstance therefore, is a sufficient inducement, to apply closely, at least to the mastery of these points.

BUT when a man has got so far, as I can see no reason that he should stop there, or that he should not farther endeavour, to make himself master of every thing, which can add grace, or force to his delivery; I shall now attempt to lay open the principles, that may serve as guides to him, in the use of the two remaining articles, tones, and gesture: upon which, all that is pleasurable, or affecting in elocution, chiefly depend.

BEFORE



BEFORE I enter upon the subject of tones, it will be necessary to fix, the precise meaning, of the term language; to know what it comprehends, and what are its bounds.

I DARE say there are few, who would not think it an affront offered to their understandings, if they were asked, 'what they mean by the term language?' as being a thing, which every rational creature, is supposed necessarily to know. And I fancy, upon such a question's being proposed, the first thought that would occur to every one, who had not properly considered the point, is, that language is composed of words. And yet, this is so far from being an adequate idea of language, that the point in which most men think its very essence to consist, is not even a necessary property of language. For language, in its full extent, means, any way or method whatsoever, by which all that passes in the mind of one man, may be manifested to another. And as this is chiefly done by an agreement in the use of certain signs, it is no matter what those signs are; there being little or no natural connection, between any verbal signs and our ideas, which is sufficiently evinced, by the variety of languages that are spoken, in the different countries of the world.

IT is true, the facility with which the communication is carried on, by means of the organs of speech, preferably to any other method; together with some other reasons, which need not here be enumerated, have made mankind in general agree, in making articulate sounds or words, the symbols of their ideas; but we have ample proof, that this did not arise from a principle of necessity, but convenience. For they who are born deaf, can make themselves understood by visible signs; and we have it on the best authority, that the Mimes of the Ancients, were perfectly intelligible, without the use of words. But why need I mention these, when every one who can



read knows, that our thoughts may be communicated by visible marks, as well as by articulate sounds?

I AM aware it will be said, that written language is only a copy of that which is spoken, and has a constant reference to articulation; the characters upon paper, being only symbols of articulate sounds.

BUT tho' all who are blest with the gift of speech, by constantly associating the ideas of articulate sounds, to those characters which they see on paper, come to imagine that there is a necessary connection between them, and that the one, is merely a symbol of the other; yet, that it is in itself, a manner of communication entirely different, and utterly independent of the other, we have ample demonstration from this; that it can be perfectly understood by those, who never had, nor ever could have, the least idea of an articulate sound. This has been fully proved, in the case of many persons born deaf, who yet could read, and understand written language perfectly well, and write their thoughts with accuracy.

IT may at first view be thought, that I am labouring a point, of little or no consequence, farther than speculation; but as I think I shall be able to shew, that this fundamental error with regard to our general idea of language, in confining it to such narrow bounds, has had a remarkable effect upon our practice; and that some of its noblest uses have been lost to us, thro' the want of a just notion of its comprehension; it must be granted, that before I proceed, it will be necessary, in the fullest manner, to clear up that point. The allowed utility of any measure, must be the first inducement, to enter on the pursuit of it; and the reasonableness of it must be shewn, before its utility will be allowed.



IN civilized countries, possessed of the collected wisdom of ages in books, the learned think they know, or have it in their power to know every thing that it is possible for the human mind to be acquainted with. In vain have several new and important discoveries, made in latter ages, as well as in our own times, shewn how ill founded this opinion is. Learned vanity, which exceeds that of every other kind, still takes up arms against any thing that is offered as new. And even amongst the most candid, on account of the many pretensions that have been made to new discoveries, which have ended in smoke, the understanding is exceedingly on its guard, on such occasions; doubts of every thing that is offered to it, which does not carry conviction; and will scarcely admit of any conclusion, that does not amount to demonstration. This is the case even in subjects that are in themselves new, and which therefore have no prejudices to encounter: But when the subject happens to be of that kind which is open to all the world; which has not only been an object of enquiry and examination, in theory, but is also to be viewed in universal practice; and therefore is of that sort, about which all mankind have formed certain opinions, or judgements; it is evident, that the prepossessions to be encountered in that case, must be much stronger; and that nothing is likely to remove them, but necessary conclusions, drawn from self-evident premises.

OF this nature, is the subject of language; which being used by all mankind, is of all others, the subject which mankind in general, think themselves best acquainted with, and that, of which they have the clearest and fullest comprehension. And yet it is of all others, that of which the most erroneous opinions are entertained, and with whose true nature, mankind in general are least acquainted. The reason of this might be clearly shewn, were there time now for such an enquiry; but it ought to make the most knowing and learned of  
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men, doubtful of their judgements in this article, when it is considered with what candour, the clearfighted and judicious Locke, has acknowledged his error in that point; and his ignorance of the true state of language, till the precision, necessary to his subject, compelled him to a strict scrutiny into its nature: in consequence of which, he was divested of the prejudices, that he had imbibed from custom and education. With what ingenuous modesty has he confessed, that consciousness of error, first gave rise to those new and important discoveries, laid open in the third book of his Essay, in which he treats of words! Where he says, 'I must confess that  
' when I first began this discourse of the understanding, and a good  
' while after, I had not the least thought, that any consideration of  
' words, was at all necessary to it.' And yet this great man found, that he could not proceed himself with any certainty, or manifest his thoughts to others with any clearness, till he had first written an entire book upon that point, which he acknowledges he had before thought, utterly unnecessary; and till he had set himself right, as well as the rest of the world, in the mistaken notions entertained of language.

WHAT a pity is it, that this penetrating writer, did not carry his enquiries farther into this important subject, as he seems in one place to promise. We might then have had, as accurate a knowledge, of the whole of language, as we now have, of that part of it which he has laid open to us. But he confined himself entirely to that branch of language, which related to his subject, an enquiry into the human understanding; his only object was, to examine the nature of words, as symbols of our ideas: Whilst the nobler branch of language, which consists of the signs of internal emotions, was untouched by him as foreign to his purpose. And however we may be indebted to him, for the new lights which he has given us into the subject, so far as he has gone; yet it is to be feared, that by stop-  
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ping there, he has not a little contributed, to the confined view which we have of language, in considering it, as made up wholly of words.

OUR pains with respect to language, are at present limited, to the narrow conception which we have of it; and therefore are wholly confined to the knowledge and use of words: And I think I may venture to appeal to my hearers, whether this is not the generally received opinion? and whether he, who perfectly understands the meaning of the words, and has the right use of them at command, is not thought to be a master of language? Yet, if it can be shewn that this is only a part of language; if it can be shewn that it has other parts, absolutely necessary to the communication of what passes in our minds, which can not possibly be done by mere words; and that too in order to answer some of the noblest, and most important ends, of such social communication; it must be allowed, that our pains ought not to be confined, to that part only; but should proportionally be extended to those other parts, which are equally necessary, and in their consequences of more importance.

I HAVE already shewn, that words are, in their own nature, no essential part of language, and are only considered so thro' custom. I shall now proceed to shew, that when by custom they are made a necessary part, they are still only a part; that they can not possibly effect all the purposes of social communication; and that there are other parts, essentially necessary, to answer its noblest and best ends.

WORDS are, by compact, the marks or symbols of our ideas; and this is the utmost extent of their power. Did nothing pass in the mind of man, but ideas; were he a different kind of being from what he is; were he like the Houyhnhms of Swift, always directed by a cool, invariable, and as I may say instinctive reason; to make  
known



known the ideas of such a mind, and its internal operations, would not be beyond the power of words: and a language composed of words only, provided there were a sufficient number of them, so that each idea, and each operation, might have its distinct mark, would sufficiently answer the end. For this we find effected amongst us, in all matters where simple reason, and mere speculation is concerned, as in the investigations of mathematical truths.

BUT as there are other things which pass in the mind of man, beside ideas; as he is not wholly made up of intellect, but on the contrary, the passions, and the fancy, compose great part of his complicated frame; as the operations of these are attended with an infinite variety of emotions in the mind, both in kind and degree; it is clear, that unless there be some means found, of manifesting those emotions, all that passes in the mind of one man can not be communicated to another. Now, as in order to know what another knows, and in the same manner that he knows it, an exact transcript of the ideas which pass in the mind of one man, must be made by sensible marks, in the mind of another; so in order to feel what another feels, the emotions which are in the mind of one man, must also be communicated to that of another, by sensible marks.

THAT the sensible marks necessary to answer this purpose, can not possibly be mere words, might fully be proved by a philosophical disquisition into their nature, were it proper at present to enter into such an enquiry: but this point may be made sufficiently clear to answer my present design, in a shorter way. It is certain that we have given names to many of these emotions, at least to such as are of the strongest, and most remarkable kind, tho' much the greater part of them, and the different degrees of all, remain without names. But the use of these names, is not to stand as types of the emotions themselves, but



only as signs, of the simple or complex ideas, which are formed of those emotions; that we may be enabled, by the help of those names, to distinguish them in the understanding, and treat of their several natures, in the same cool manner as we do with regard to other ideas, that have no connection with any emotions of the mind.

EVERY one will at once acknowledge that the terms anger, fear, love, hatred, pity, grief, will not excite in him the sensations of those passions, and make him angry or afraid, compassionate or grieved; nor, should a man declare himself to be under the influence of any of those passions, in the most explicit and strong words that the language can afford, would he in the least affect us, or gain any credit, if he used no other signs but words. If any one should say in the same tone of voice that he uses in delivering indifferent propositions from a cool understanding, 'Sure never any mortal was so overwhelmed with grief as I am at this present.' Or, 'My rage is rouzed to a pitch of frenzy, I can not command it: Avoid me, be gone this moment, or I shall tear you to pieces:' Sure no one would feel any pity for the distress of the former, or any fear from the threats of the latter. We should either believe that he jests, or if he would be thought serious, we should be moved to laughter at his absurdity. And why is this? But because he makes use of words only, as the signs of emotions, which it is impossible they can represent; and omits the use of the true signs of the passions, which are, tones, looks, and gestures.

THIS will serve to shew us that the language, or sensible marks, by which the emotions of the mind are discovered, and communicated from man to man, are entirely different from words, and independent of them. Nor was this kind of language left to the invention of man, or to the chance of such arbitrary marks, as he should



should think proper to affix to the passions, in order to characterize them: No, it was necessary to society, and to the state of human nature in general, that the language of the animal passions of man at least, should be fixed, self-evident, and universally intelligible; and it has accordingly been impressed, by the unerring hand of nature, on the human frame. The improvement and exercise of the intellectual faculties, to any eminent degree, could fall to the lot of but a small portion of mankind; as even the necessities for the support of life, can not be acquired by much the greater part, but by such constant labour and industry as will afford no time for contemplative studies. But tho' it be not necessary to society, that all men should know much; it is necessary that they should feel much, and have a mutual sympathy, in whatsoever affects their fellow creatures. All our affections therefore and emotions, belonging to man in his animal state, are so distinctly characterized, by certain marks, that they can not be mistaken; and this language of the passions, carries with it the stamp of its almighty Artificer; utterly unlike the poor workmanship of imperfect man, as it is not only understood by all the different nations of the world, without pains or study; but excites also similar emotions, or corresponding effects in all minds alike.

Thus, the tones expressive of sorrow, lamentation, mirth, joy, hatred, anger, love, pity, &c. are the same in all nations, and consequently can excite emotions in us analogous to those passions, when accompanying words which we do not understand: Nay the very tones themselves, independent of words, will produce the same effects, as has been amply proved by the power of musical imitations. And tho' these tones, are usually accompanied with words, in order that the understanding may at the same time perceive the cause of these emotions, by a communication of the particular ideas which excite them; yet that the whole energy, or power of exciting analogous



logous emotions in others, lies in the tones themselves, may be known from this ; that whenever the force of these passions is extreme, words give place to inarticulate sounds : sighs, murmurings, in love ; sobs, groans, and cries in grief ; half choaked sounds in rage ; and shrieks in terrour, are then the only language heard. And the experience of mankind may be appealed to, whether these have not more power in exciting sympathy, than any thing that can be done by mere words.

NOR has this language of the passions been confined to man only ; for in that respect, he seems to be included in the general law, given to all animals that are not mute, or wholly incapable of uttering any sound ; as they also express their passions by certain tones, which striking the auditory nerves of those of the same species, always produce correspondent effects ; inasmuch as their kindred organs, are invariably tuned by the hand of nature, in unison to those sounds.

BUT it is to be observed, that each species of animals, seem to have a language of their own, not at all understood, or felt by the rest. The lowing of the cow affects not the lamb ; nor does the calf regard the bleating of the sheep. The neighing of the steed, calls up all the attention of the horse-kind ; they gaze towards the place from whence the sound comes, and answer it, or run that way, if the steed be not in view : whilst the cows and sheep raise not their heads from the ground, but continue to feed, utterly unmoved. The organs of hearing in each species, are tuned only to the sounds of their own ; and whilst the roaring of the lioness, makes the forest tremble, it is the sweetest music to the ears of her young. This shews us, that the auditory nerves of animals, are constructed in such a way, as to be affected only with such sounds, as immediately regard the two chief ends of their being ; the propa-  
tion,



tion, and preservation of their species : All other sounds therefore, excepting such as excite sympathy or antipathy, are indifferent to them. Sympathy, with those of their own kind ; antipathy, against such as are their natural enemies, or destructive of their species. Those which excite sympathy, may be supposed to be all in concord ; those which rouse antipathy, to be discords ; which by creating an uneasy sensation, immediately dispose them to flight, to avoid the enemy. Thus the cry of dogs, warns the hare of his danger : and the howlings of the wolf, alarm the flock. The different species of animals, may therefore be considered, as so many different nations speaking different languages, that have no commerce with each other ; each of which consequently understands none but their own ; excepting only those who are in a state of warfare ; by whom the language of the enemy is sufficiently understood, for the purpose of self preservation.

As the passions and emotions of the several kinds of animals, are very different, according to their different natures, so is there an equal diversity of tones, by which these several passions and emotions are expressed : From the horrible roarings of the lion, to the gentle bleatings of the lamb : from the loud bellowings of the wild bull, to the low purring of the domestic cat. But as there is no passion or emotion whatsoever, in the whole animal world, which is not to be found in man, so equally comprehensive is the language of his passions, which are all manifested by suitable tones. The roaring of the lion, is not more terrible than the voice of his anger ; nor the cooings of the pigeon, more soft, than the murmurs of his love. The crowing of the morning cock, is not so clear and sprightly as the notes of his joy ; nor the melancholy mournings of the turtle, so plaintive as those of his woe. The organs of hearing therefore in man, are so constructed, as not to be indifferent to any kind of tone, either



either in his own species, or in the animal world, that is expressive of emotion or passion: from all they receive either pleasure or pain, as they are affected with sympathy or antipathy. It is true that like the several tribes of animals, man is most affected, or has the strongest sympathy excited, by such tones as are uttered by those of his own species; and in proportion also by those which most nearly resemble them in others. We are moved most by the distressful cries of those animals, that have any similitude to the human voice, such as the fawn, and the hare, when seized in pursuit by dogs. But still we both feel and understand the nature of all others. Nor can any animal utter any sound which we cannot explain, or tell from what emotion, or passion it proceeds. This distinguishing faculty was necessary to man as master of the animal race, that by understanding their several languages, he might relieve their distresses, and supply their wants. And indeed we find, that the tones of all domestic animals, expressive of their wants or distresses, have a wonderful power over the human heart, and mechanically rouse us to their relief.

THUS extensive as are the powers of the human ear, those of the human voice, do not fall short of them; but are exactly suited to them in degree and comprehension; there is no tone which the ear can distinguish, that the voice, by pains and practice, is not capable of uttering. Hence it comes to pass, that as man understands the language of the different tribes of animals, so he can make himself understood by them. The horse rejoices in the applauding tones of his rider's voice, and trembles when he changes them to those of anger. What blandishments do we see in the dog when his master soothes him in kind notes; what fear, and even shame, when he changes them to those of chiding? By those the waggoner directs his team, and the herdsman his flock. Even animals of the most savage

nature



nature; are not proof against collective powers of the human voice; and shouts of multitudes will put wild beasts to flight, who can hear without emotion the roarings of the thunder.

BUT that man should be furnished with such an extensive power in these points, even in his animal state, will appear reasonable, when we consider that his nature, is an abstract of all animal nature; and that in his tribe are to be found, all the emotions and passions, that belong to all the several tribes: Consequently all the marks expressive of those emotions, or such as are similar to them, should belong to that tribe. If man is capable of being the most social, the most tender and affectionate to those of his own species, of any animal; he is at the same time, capable of becoming a greater enemy, and of having a stronger hatred and detestation of them, than is to be found, even amongst the different tribes of animals, that are born in a natural state of enmity. All the natural language therefore of sympathy, and antipathy, should be given to him in a higher degree, for the same reason that it is in a more limited state assigned to the several tribes of animals.

THUS far we find, that man, in his animal capacity, is furnished, like all other animals, by nature herself, with a language which requires neither study, art, nor imitation; which spontaneously breaks out in the exactest expressions, nicely proportioned to the degrees of his inward emotions; and which is not only universally understood, but felt by those of the same species, as also in certain degrees by the rest of the animal world. That animals should come perfect from the hand of nature, in this respect, as well as in every thing else, seems reasonable from this consideration; that they are utterly incapable of improving themselves, or of making any alteration in their frames by their own care or pains; their several faculties by an in-



variable law, growing to perfection, and decaying with their bodies, with as little assistance from themselves, as vegetation in herbs or trees is performed, in the insensitive world. As the first of animals, nature has not been less provident with regard to man; on the contrary this, as well as all his other animal faculties, is bestowed on him in a degree suitable to the superiority of his rank. But as man is something greater than the first of animals; as he is the link between animal and spiritual beings, and partakes of both their natures; other faculties, and other principles, belonging to his nobler, spiritual part, disclose themselves; of which there are no traces in the animal world.

THE first great distinction between the human and animal species, and which seems to mark their boundaries, is this: That it is in the power of man, by his own pains and industry, to forward the perfection of his nature. And what the nobler part of his nature is, is clearly pointed out by that distinction; because it is that nobler part only, or such of his animal faculties, as are necessary to forward the perfection of that nobler part, which are capable of improvement by such pains. All the organs and faculties of his body necessary to his animal life, are so fashioned by the hand of nature, that they grow of course to perfection; but the organs (if I may be allowed the expression) and faculties of his mind, necessary to his rational life, are only in embryo; and it depends wholly upon the assistance of others, together with his own care, to give them birth, and bring them to maturity.

HENCE arises the necessity of a social state to man both for the unfolding, and exerting of his nobler faculties. For this purpose, a power of opening a communication between mind and mind, was furnished in the most easy way, by bestowing on him the organs of speech.



speech. But still we are to observe, that nature did no more than furnish the power and means; she did not give the language, as in the case of the passions, but left it to the industry of men, to find out, and agree upon such articulate sounds, as they should chuse to make the symbols of their ideas. And she seems to have laid down the same general law, with respect to every thing which regarded the nobler part of man; to furnish nothing but what was absolutely necessary, and leave the rest to his own industry: From the exertion of which, his merit was to arise, and his pretensions to stand a candidate for his admission, into an higher, and happier order of beings. Accordingly as she did not furnish the words, which were to be the symbols of his ideas; neither did she furnish the tones, which were to manifest, and communicate by their own virtue, the internal exertions and emotions, of such of his nobler faculties, as chiefly distinguish him from the brute species; but left them also, like words, to the care and invention of man; contenting herself with supplying him with an instrument, of such a compass as would furnish a sufficient variety of tones, to answer all the variety of emotions, exertions, and energies of all his faculties, if sought for, and settled by agreement, to be their marks. Nor has art found those which are of her invention to be of less efficacy, or less capable of exciting correspondent emotions, than those even of nature, when established by custom; in this case justly called second nature. The only difference between them lying in this, that the tones of the animal passions, of themselves excite analogous emotions, without the intervention of any thing else; they are understood, by being felt. But the tones resulting from the emotions and exertions of our nobler faculties, tho' they excite feeling, as it is in the nature of all tones to do so, yet it is only of a vague and indeterminate nature; not corresponding to the energies in the mind of the speaker, unless they are associated with words, or the symbols of the ideas, which give



rife to those energies and emotions; their nature and degree then become fixed, and the hearer both feels and understands them. When any tones therefore are affixed to certain modes of expression, and adopted into general use; those tones, tho' they have no natural connection with the sentiment, no more than words have with ideas; yet by such association, become equally intelligible, and equally affecting with those that have, and are made part of the language; insomuch, that were those expressions to be uttered, without those tones, they would not convey their full meaning.

Thus far I have considered tones, chiefly in contradistinction to words, as the types and language of the passions, and all internal emotions, in the same way as articulate sounds, are the types and language of ideas, independent of any such emotions. But when we come to examine the powers of each in their full extent, we shall find, that tho' words are limited to their peculiar office, and never can supply the place of tones; yet tones, on the other hand, are not confined to their province, but often supply the place of words, as marks of ideas. And tho' the ease and distinctness with which our ideas are marked by articulate sounds, has made all mankind agree to use them in discourse, yet that tones are capable in a great measure of suppling their place, is clear from this; that the Chinese language is chiefly made up of tones, and the same individual word shall have sixty different meanings, according to the different tones in which it is pronounced. Here then it is clear, that fifty nine of the sixty ideas, are marked by tones; for the same individual word, pronounced exactly in the same manner, can not possibly by itself, be a clear and distinct mark, for more than one idea. This indeed has prodigiously increased the difficulty of their language, so that it is scarcely possible for strangers to acquire it; and it is the labour of a man's life, even among the natives, to make himself fully master

of



of it. Such a use of the tones therefore, in equal extent, has not been adopted by any other nation. But there are none which have it not in some degree. It is true these tones amongst us, are not annexed to words in their separate state, but only when they are ranged in sentences; and he must be very ignorant of speech, who does not know, that the same individual words in a sentence, shall have several very different meanings according to the tones which accompany the emphasis. To the use of these tones is owing in a great measure conciseness of discourse; and the necessity of multiplying words in a language, to a degree that might make them burthensome to the memory, is removed. Nor are these the only advantages arising to language from tones; for by thus setting off words by tones, and making them determine their meaning, an agreeable variety may be introduced, into the most abstracted and philosophical discourses, in which there is no room for the language of the passions and emotions; and which consequently must occasion disgust, and soon weary attention, if delivered by the use of mere words, in one dull uniform tone. On the same account it is fortunate also that tones have been made the marks of the several pauses; and the links which unite together, the several members of sentences and periods.

BUT beside the use of tones, in the exertion of his animal, and intellectual faculties; there is another part of man's nature which seems to be the link that joins the other two, a great part of whose exertions, have their very essence, so far as they are communicated by the voice, in tones; I mean the fancy.—To one branch of this part of his frame, Nature herself has furnished matter for a language, different in its kind from all other, and peculiar to man; I mean, risibility; and this matter, according to the exertions of fancy, is to be modified into an infinity of shapes. There is a laugh of joy, and a laugh of ridicule; there is a laugh of anger, and a laugh of contempt.



tempt. Nay there are few of our passions, to which fancy can not adapt, and associate this language. And should we trace it thro' all its several modifications and degrees, from the loud burst of joy, to the tones belonging to the dry sneer of contempt; we should find, that an extensive, and expressive language, independent of words, belongs to this faculty alone. Let any one who has been present at a well acted comedy, only reflect, how very different the sentiments, characters, and humour have appeared, in the representation, from what was conveyed to him by the mere perusal of the words in his closet, and he will need no other proof to shew him how necessary, and how extensive a part, the tones make, of the language of fancy.

FROM what has been said, it will sufficiently appear, how grossly they are mistaken, who think that nothing is essentially necessary to language, but words: And that it is no matter, in what tones their sentiments are uttered, or whether there be any used, so that the words are but distinctly pronounced, and with such force of voice as to be clearly heard. Since it must be allowed, that the use of language is not merely to communicate ideas, but also all the internal operations, emotions, and exertions, of the intellectual, sensitive, and imaginative faculties of man: Since it must be allowed, that from the frame of our language, our very ideas can not be communicated, nor consequently our meaning understood, without the right use of tones; as many of our ideas are marked and distinguished from each other by tones, and not words: and since it must be allowed that the connection or repugnance of our ideas, their relationship or disagreement, and various dependence on each other in sentences, are chiefly pointed out by tones belonging to the several pauses.

WHEN therefore we reflect, that not only every thing which is pleasurable, every thing which is forcible and affecting in utterance,



but also the most material points necessary to a full and distinct comprehension, even of the sense of what is uttered, depends upon tones; it may well astonish us to think, that so essential a part of language, should in a civilized country be wholly neglected. Nay worse, that our youth should not only be uninstructed in the true use of these, but in the little art that is used, they should be early perverted by false rules, utterly repugnant to those which nature has clearly pointed out to us. In consequence of which, all the noble ends which might be answered in a free state, by a clear, lively, and affecting public elocution, are in a great measure lost to us. And how can it be otherwise, when we have given up the vivifying, energetic language, stamped by God himself upon our natures, for that which is the cold, lifeless work of art, and invention of man? and bartered that which can penetrate the inmost recesses of the heart, for one which dies in the ear, or fades on the sight.

I SHOULD now proceed to lay down some practical rules and observations, with regard to this material article, but that there is another branch of language so nearly connected with this, that all rules in regard to the one, have a necessary relation to the other; and therefore it will be both the shortest, and clearest method, to place them together in view. The branch which I mean is that part of language, which is manifested to sight, by the expression of the countenance and gesture: Of which I shall treat in my next.



But also the most material points necessary to a full and distinct comprehension, even of the limits of what is material, is a point of view; it may well afford us to think that the elements of language, treated in a civilized country, be wholly neglected. My words, that our youth should not only be distinguished in the true art of style, but in the little art that is called, it should be every private-ed by the rules, which are necessary to the study of nature, and which pointed out to us. In consequence of which, all the noble ends which might be attained in a literature, by a scholar, a lawyer, and a poet, being public education, are in a great measure lost to us. And how is it to be remedied? When we have seen the rivet, the engraving, the language, the science, the art, the profession, the industry, the which is the best, the most useful, the most honorable, and the most profitable, that which can penetrate the narrow circles of the heart, for one which lies in the heart, or rather on the light.

I should now proceed to lay down some general rules and observations, which regard to the material article, but that there is another branch of language so nearly connected with this, that all rules in regard to the one, have a necessary relation to the other, and that it will be both the shortest, and the most useful, to treat of them together in view. The branch which I mean is that of style, which is necessary to the study of the sciences, the arts, the professions, and the industry, of which I have treated in my former lectures. It is the most useful, the most honorable, and the most profitable, that which can penetrate the narrow circles of the heart, for one which lies in the heart, or rather on the light.



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## LECTURE VII.

### G E S T U R E.

**H**ITHERTO, language has been considered, as addressed to the mind thro' the ear, by means of words, and tones. But Nature did not trust an article, so essential to the well-being of man, to a communication by one sense only; she has also made it visible to the eye, as well as audible to the ear. So that the deprivation of either sense, should not wholly prevent the exercise of man's nobler faculties. As she has annexed tones to the passions, to make their exertions known thro' the ear; so has she associated to them looks and gestures, to manifest them to the eye. The one, may be justly called the speech, the other, the hand-writing of nature. And her hand-writing, like her speech, carries evident marks with it, of its divine original; as it corresponds exactly to its archetype, and is therefore universally legible, without pains or study; and as it contains in itself a power, of exciting similar, or analogous emotions. Not like the writing of man, which having no affinity with its archetype, can be understood only by pains and labour; and containing no virtue of its own, can of itself, communicate no emotion.

NOR is the written language of nature less expressive, or less copious, than her speech. They seem nicely suited to each other, in  
Q degree



degree and power; in their effects exactly similar, having no other difference, but what arises from the difference of the organs, thro' which they are conveyed. As every passion has its peculiar tone, so has it, its peculiar look or gesture. And in each, the several degrees are marked, with the nicest exactness. Both indeed proceeding from the touching of one master-string, internal feeling, must always answer to each other, if I may so speak, in perfect unison. Thus far they are equal in point of expression; and with respect to copiousness as it has been before observed, that the human voice is furnished with an infinite variety of tones, suitable to the infinite variety of emotions in the mind; so are the human countenance and limbs, capable of an infinite variety of changes, suitable to the tones; or rather to the emotions, whence they both take their rise. To this purpose every nobler organ in man's complicated frame, and the whole animal œconomy contribute. The muscles, nerves, the blood and animal spirits, all are at work to shew internal commotion. The contraction or remission of the solids, shewn by courageous exertion of action, or pusillanimous trembling; the rushing or withdrawing of the fluids, seen in blushing or paleness; are strong and self-evident characters. But of all the organs, the eye, rightly called the window to the breast, contains the greatest variety, as well as distinction and force of characters. In rage it is inflamed, in fear it sickens; it sparkles in joy, in distress it is clouded. Nature has indeed annexed to the passion of grief, a more forcible character than any other, that of tears; of all parts of language, the most expressive. And justly was this extraordinary sign of that passion, annexed to the nature of man; the child of sorrow, and inhabitant of the vale of woe: not only to ease the burthened heart, but more powerfully to excite his fellow creatures to pity, and to relieve his distress. Thus at once affording balm to the afflicted, and inciting mankind to the exercise of their noblest quality, benevolence. On which account, this



this single character, fums up in it the whole power of language; and in certain circumstances, has more force alone, than all the united endeavours, of words, tones, and gestures, can come up to. Such were the precious drops that fell from Milton's Eve, which Adam kissed away; as

*gracious signs of sweet remorse,  
And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.*

SUCH were the tears of Sigismunda, in Dryden's beautiful description, shed over Guiscardo's heart.

*She said—Her brim-full eyes that ready stood,  
And only wanted will, to weep a flood,  
Releas'd their watry store, and pour'd amain,  
Like clouds low-hung, a sober show'r of rain;  
Mute, solemn sorrow, free from female noise,  
Such, as the majesty of grief destroys;  
For bending o'er the cup, the tears she shed,  
Seem'd, by the posture, to discharge her head  
O'erfill'd before; and oft her mouth applied  
To the cold heart, she kiss'd at once, and cry'd.*

NOR is the virtue of this expression confined to our own species only, but it is of all others that which most moves us, in such animals as are capable of it. On which account, the strong painter of nature, Shakespear, in his description of the wounded stag, standing over the stream, took care not to omit it; where he says

*the big round drops  
Coursed one another down his innocent nose,  
In piteous chase.*

Which is by much the most affecting part of the picture.

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BUT



BUT tho' in this written language of nature, she has given such forcible, and distinct characters, to all the animal passions of man, and proportionally to such as have a near affinity to them, or are blended with them; yet she has laid down the same law, with regard to the visible signs, of the exertions and emotions of all his nobler faculties, as she has done with regard to the tones. In both she has furnished the means with equal liberality; but has left it to the invention and care of man, to make a right use of them, and apply them in suitable degrees. By the exertion of such skill and pains, it would be found that the visible language alone, which can be shewn in the features and limbs of man, is of itself sufficient, without other aid, to every purpose of social communication. To instance only in two articles, the eyes, and hands: What inward emotion is there, which can not be manifested by these? Do not the eyes discover humility, pride; cruelty, compassion; reflection, dissipation; kindness, resentment? Is there an emotion of fancy, is there a shade of ridicule, which they can not represent? Let any one who has seen Mr. Garrick perform, consider how much he was indebted to the language of his eyes, and there will be no occasion to say more, to give him an idea of the extent and power of expression, to which that language may be brought.

WITH respect to the power of the hands, every one knows that with them, we can demand, or promise; call, dismiss; threaten, supplicate; ask, deny; shew joy, sorrow, detestation, fear, confession, penitence, admiration, respect; and many other things now in common use. But how much farther their powers might be carried, thro' our neglect of using them, we little know. And indeed the extensiveness of this visible language, would scarce gain credit with us, notwithstanding all the accounts of it handed down from antiquity, particularly with respect to the mimes, had we not instances  
of



of natural mimes, now living, who have been compelled to the study and practice of this language, thro' the misfortune of having been born without the sense of hearing.

HAVING sufficiently shewn the force and extent of this language of nature, and the absolute necessity of it to man, in order to the exertion, exercise, and manifestation of all his nobler faculties, it may justly excite wonder to reflect, that it has been in general so little cultivated; and that history furnishes us with an account, but of two nations, out of the great variety that have inhabited this peopled globe since the creation, that ever applied themselves to the regular study and practice of it, so as to bring it to perfection. And these were the Greeks and Romans; who raised themselves to such an height above the rest of mankind, that when we examine their history, survey their mighty works, and compare them with those of other nations, their proportion to the rest of the world, seems to be that of the Brobdignags to the Lilliputians.

It is true that in some other countries, this language of signs, has in some degree prevailed; but the difference between the Ancients and Moderns, lies in this. That the Ancients, founded all their instituted signs, on nature; from her they drew all their stores; fitted them in the nicest and exactest manner to the emotions which they were to express; and adapted them so to their artificial language, that their whole delivery form'd the compleatest harmony: the words, tones, looks, and gestures, corresponding to each other, in such a way, as that each contributed to enforce, and adorn the other; and their united efforts, produced the sentiments of the mind, in their full proportion and beauty. So that all mankind who saw, and heard them, were charmed with the manner of their delivery, tho' they understood not their speech; and partook of their emotions;

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even without any communication of their ideas. But amongst the Moderns, the instituted signs of tones, gesture, &c. were not founded on nature, but caprice and fancy; and obtained their whole force, from fashion and custom. Consequently, they had neither meaning, nor beauty, to any but the natives of each country, and were totally different from each other in the several countries; which is sufficiently known by all, who are conversant with the natives of France, Spain, and Italy. But of all nations in the world, the English seem to have the least use of this language of signs; there being few instituted signs of emotions, either of tones, looks, or gestures, that are adopted into general use. On the contrary, each individual, either follows his own fancy in this respect, and has what is called a way of his own; or else adopts the manner of some other, who pleases his fancy, and of whom he is altogether a mimick,

FROM what has been said, it is apparent that no general practical rules, I mean such as would be of any efficacy, can be laid down in this respect. For general practical rules must be founded on general practice; and as there is no such standard, in these countries, to refer to, it would be in vain to lay down such rules, as can not be explained and enforced by examples. In some points, that demand practice, as well as speculation, the practical part must be obtained by the imitation of patterns, and continual exercise in that way, till the imitation becomes perfect, and passes into a habit. But where there are no general models to be copied from, there can be no general practice, founded on imitation. In Greece and Rome, all the public speakers, agreeing as much in the use of the same signs, or language of nature, as they did in the use of the same words, or language of art; afforded general, constant, and sure patterns of imitation to others. In France, Italy, and Spain, as in each country, there is an uniform, steady use of the same signs, tho' in a more confined way,



way, yet so far they also afford sure patterns of imitation. But in England, where there are scarce any traces of a general agreement in the use of such signs, there can be no observations drawn from general practice, no rules laid down that require explanation by examples, nor no manner recommended, which demands the aid of patterns. In this case, all that can be done is, to lay down such rules to individuals, as shall enable them to avoid faults, not acquire beauties. It is in the power of rules to compass the former, the latter can not be obtained without models and practice. I say can not be obtained; for to some, nature has been uncommonly bountiful; and in those who have had the good fortune to escape ill habits, a native grace will appear, beyond what could be acquired by art alone; but of this the instances are rare. If instances of such extraordinary gifts are few, much fewer are the examples of such, as have not been corrupted by custom. And indeed when these gifts are bestowed in the most eminent degree, they are capable of great improvement by art; so that industry is equally useful, if not equally necessary to all.

It has been already observed, that as there is no common standard to be referred to, no general models for imitation, in the use of tones and gesture; each individual, either forms a manner peculiar to himself, or adopts that of some other, that strikes his fancy. Of these two ways, there can be no doubt, which a man should follow. He that forms to himself a manner of his own, will probably acquire such a one, as will be most consonant to his own powers and his own feelings. The very ease with which he falls into this, and the difficulty, as well as absurdity, of putting any constraint upon his nature, and forcing his organs, where he has no object of imitation in view, will of course accomplish this point. But he who endeavours to adopt the manner of another, loses sight of his own nature, and puts a constraint upon his organs. For men do not differ  
more



more from each other in their faces, than they do in their powers of delivery. And the same manner which is easy and agreeable in one man, becomes constrained and disgusting, when assumed by another. The reason is, that all constraint upon nature is instantly perceived, as it produces affectation, and of course destroys true feeling; for it is as impossible, where affectation takes place in the manner of delivery, or in the signs of inward emotions, that the feelings of the heart should be excited, as that two musical strings, not in unison, should vibrate to each other, when one only is struck. Fantastical emotions will produce fantastical signs, and fantastical signs, by reaction, will produce fantastical emotions. Both, having their rise in the imagination, may operate upon the fancy, and produce effects there, but never can reach the heart; as all communication between them, is necessarily cut off by affectation. Thus the fancied operations of the spirit, in the people called Quakers, manifested by the most unnatural signs; and in some other religious sects, by a certain cant, and extravagant gestures, produce powerful effects, on the imaginations of such hearers, as are bred up in the persuasion, that such signs are the language of the spirit: But it must be evident, upon observing both the preachers, and their auditory, that it is only the imagination, which is so wrought upon; as there is no discovering in their countenances, any signs which are the natural concomitants of the feelings of the heart. This sort of language of emotions therefore, is well calculated to make enthusiasts, but not believers.

In such a situation of things, the rule by which all public speakers are to guide themselves is obvious and easy. Let each, in the first place, avoid all imitation of others; let him give up all pretensions to art, for it is certain that it is better to have none, than not enough; and no man has enough, who has not arrived at such a perfection



perfection of art, as wholly to conceal his art; a thing not to be compassed but by the united endeavours, of the best instruction, perfect patterns, and constant practice. Let him forget that he ever learned to read; at least, let him wholly forget his reading tones. Let him speak entirely from his feelings; and they will find much truer signs to manifest themselves by, than he could find for them. Let him always have in view, what the chief end of speaking is; and he will see the necessity of the means proposed to answer the end. The chief end of all public speakers is to persuade; and in order to persuade, it is above all things necessary, that the speaker, should at least appear himself to believe, what he utters; but this can never be the case, where there are any evident marks of affectation, or art. On the contrary, when a man delivers himself in his usual manner, and with the same tones and gesture, that he is accustomed to use, when he speaks from his heart; however awkward that manner may be, however ill-regulated the tones, he will still have the advantage, of being thought sincere; which of all others, is the most necessary article, towards securing attention and belief; as affectation of any kind, is the surest way to destroy both.

IN elocution, the two great articles are, force, and grace; the one has its foundation chiefly in nature, the other in art. When united, they mutually support each other; when separated, their powers are very different. Nature can do much without art; art but little without nature. Nature, assaults the heart; art, plays upon the fancy. Force of speaking, will produce emotion and conviction; grace, only excites pleasure and admiration. As the one is the primary, and the other but a secondary end of speech, it is evident, that where one or the other, is wholly to take place, the former should have the preference. Grace in elocution, it is hardly possible to obtain, in the present state of things; Force of delivery, is the

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necessary



necessary result of a clear head, and warm heart ; provided no bad habits interfere, and the speaker suffers his manner to be regulated wholly by his feelings and conceptions.

PERHAPS it may be thought, that in reducing all which might be offered on this head, to one simple rule, there has been little done, and that no great improvement is likely to ensue ; or at best, that by recommending it to each, to follow his own manner, whatever it be, he will be left in the possession of all the faults and defects, belonging to that manner. It will be urged, that a system of rules, pointing out what particular tones and gestures, are in their own nature, best adapted to express the several emotions of the mind, would be the true means, to shew how people may arrive at propriety and grace, in those ornamental parts of delivery. But they who judge in this manner, have not sufficiently considered the nature of the subject ; and therefore attribute more power to precept alone, than it is possessed of. Practical rules, differ much from those which are merely speculative ; nor will informing the understanding in some cases, by any means produce right execution, without other assistance. Can any one be taught to sing, or to dance, without the aid of masters, and patterns for imitation ? Why should we suppose then, that the use of regular tones and gesture, which are of the same nature, and founded upon the same principles, can be acquired any other way ? Should we not laugh at the absurdity, of any singing or dancing-master, that should propose to instruct his pupils only by laying down, each, the rules of his art ; and shewing the practical part by singing, or dancing himself, without making his pupils also practice, and correcting every deviation from rule, and every fault in their execution, till it become exact ? Should we not suppose, in such a case, that the pupils, at best, must become but very awkward, and inaccurate mimics of their manner ? The same fate must



also attend any attempt, to teach the use of regular tones and gesture, without pursuing the same method as is used by the masters in their kindred arts. Nothing would be more easy, than to produce a more comprehensive system of rules, on that head, than any extant; but this would be a work of more ostentation, than use. Were there masters to teach this, in the same manner as other arts are taught, such a system of rules, would not only be useful but necessary. And indeed, without such a system of rules, to qualify persons for the office of instructing pupils methodically in the art, we can never hope to see proper masters arise amongst us. Till that comes to pass, the best service I can do, is to inform individuals how they may by their own endeavours arrive at such a degree of excellence, as they can attain without the aid of masters; and I am much deceived if the observation of this rule will not be found the only means of accomplishing the point.

To those who imagine, that this would make but little improvement, in the article of delivery, I must beg leave to observe, that they have not sufficiently considered, the chief cause of its low state amongst us. Which is, that an artificial manner, either from early institution, or subsequent imitation, has in general supplanted that which is natural in most public speakers, and readers; or in some degree affected the best. And this artificial manner, not being founded on true principles, and always differing from that which is natural, of course carries with it evident marks of art, and affectation. So that the restoring a natural manner of delivery, would be bringing about an entire revolution, in its most essential parts. And if I can shew, that after a person has made himself master of the fundamental points, which have been considered at large in the former lectures, nothing else would be wanting, to answer the great purposes of delivery, and to obtain him the character of an excellent speaker, in proportion to his natural talents; if I can shew too, that



it is in the power of every one to compass this point, if he seriously applies to it; I can not but think, that every end, which could reasonably be expected from a course of this nature, will be fully answered.

I know the objection ready to be started against this method is, what has been already mentioned, that if every one follows his own manner, the faults belonging to that manner, must of course accompany his delivery. 'Tis granted; and it were to be wished, that a way were opened, by which speakers might be cured of all faults, in all the parts of delivery; but as this is impossible, without the aid of masters; and since thro' want of masters, faults there must be; the question is, whether a person should take up with his own, or those of another? A man's own faults, sit easy on him; habit has given them the air of being natural; those of another, are not assumed without awkwardness, they are evidently artificial. Where truth is concerned, the very faults of a speaker which seem natural, are more agreeable to the hearer, than such beauties as are apparently borrowed; in the same manner as the most indifferent natural complexion, is preferred by those whose taste is not corrupted, to the finest painted skin. It is often seen, that the motions and address of a man, awkwardly formed, appear more graceful, on account of their ease, than those of the best shaped, who ape the manner of others; and who shew an evident attention to their deportment; for that, must always be the case of copyists.

BUT besides, in the present state of elocution, no one need be apprehensive of suffering, by faults of this kind; for they will either not be perceived by the general eye, or be overlooked by the most critical. It has been already observed, that he who is master even of the rudiments, passes amongst us for a good speaker; and if to these, force be superadded in his manner, we have every thing that



we require in a good delivery. Grace and harmony, as they are scarce known amongst us, so are they in general out of the question. Nothing can shock us, in the manner of delivery, but some manifest absurdity, or impropriety. He who speaks from his heart, can never fall into any absurdity in his manner; this is what they only are liable to, who adopt the manner of another, or are governed by imperfect, or ill-founded rules of art. And with respect to impropriety, as that consists in offending against some general known rule, where no such rules exist, there can be no perceptible impropriety. Singularity of manner, is far from giving us any idea of impropriety, because it is so customary, as to seem conformable to the very genius of the nation. Nor is singularity of manner, in the present state of elocution, prejudicial to the main object of delivery; the reason of this will be immediately perceived, when we consider the difference, between impropriety in the use of words, as signs of our ideas, and that of tones and gesture, as signs of our emotions. Words being made by compact signs of our ideas, have a general meaning annexed to them, in which all are agreed; and he who is singular in his use of them, and annexes any other signification to them, than what is established by such general agreement, renders himself unintelligible, and is guilty of a manifest impropriety. But the use of tones and gesture, as marks of our emotions, not having been established amongst us, by any such general compact; at least there being but very few that have any settled significance; each individual, has a proportional latitude, to adopt such as he thinks proper, for his own use. Amongst the Greeks and Romans indeed, by whom the language of emotions, was as well regulated, and universally understood, as the language of ideas; any change, in the use of established tones and gesture, was looked upon to be as great an impropriety, as the use of words, in a different sense from what custom had annexed



nexed to them. And the same holds good also in France, Spain, and Italy, so far as such signs are adopted into general use. But for the reasons before assigned, it is not so with us. Each man, has in a great measure, a language of his own, by which he expresses his emotions. If it be said, that such a diversity in the use of this language, must be attended with as bad consequences, as the confusion of the tongues at Babel, and render it impossible for men to understand the meaning of each other's signs; in answer to this, it is to be observed, that there is an essential difference between the two languages, as to their intelligibility, or mode of understanding them. The language of ideas, can not possibly be understood, without an agreement in the use of the same signs or words; but the language of emotions, when associated to words, requires no such agreement in the use of the same signs, to point out their significancy. For, as words shew the ideas which pass in the mind of the speaker, and which are the causes of his emotions, the nature of the signs by which the speaker manifests those emotions, is at the same time fully displayed. On the other hand, it is not in the power of the language of emotions, to give us the least insight into the language of ideas; for if a person, speaking an unknown tongue, should accompany his words, with the most animated gesture, expressive looks, and significant tones; tho' we may perfectly understand the nature of his emotions, and partake of his feelings, yet it is impossible, without an interpreter, to know the cause of them, or the particular ideas in the mind of the speaker, that gave them birth. But should three natives of France, Spain, and Italy, relate the same thing successively to one, who understood their several tongues, with tones, looks, and gestures, entirely different from each other, he would not only understand the meaning of their words, but of their concomitant signs also. In this case the language of ideas, illustrates



illustrates all the different languages of emotion, in the same manner as the sun illuminates the several planets ; which dark in themselves, shine only by reflected light.

THIS being the case, persons who are advanced in life, need not have any solicitude, about the delicacies and graces of delivery ; force and expression, will answer all their ends ; and these, it is in their own power to give, to their external marks, in proportion to what passes within their minds, only by indulging their feelings, and avoiding all affectation and art. Of this we have as many instances in private life, as we meet with persons who speak from their hearts, upon any topic, or incident which nearly concerns them. And if we seldom meet with it in public discourses, it is either, because the speakers, have not their hearts affected by the subjects, upon which they harangue ; or because, an artificial manner, for the reasons before mentioned, has supplanted that of the natural kind. This it was which Betterton meant by his reply to the Bishop of London ; who, asking him on a certain occasion, ‘ What could be the reason, ‘ that whole audiences should be moved to tears, and have all sorts ‘ of passions excited, at the representation of some story on the stage, ‘ which they knew to be feigned, and in the event of which, they ‘ were not at all concerned ; yet that the same persons, should sit so ‘ utterly unmoved, at discourses from the pulpit, upon subjects of ‘ the utmost importance to them, relative not only to their temporal, but also their eternal interests ?’ He received from Betterton this memorable reply ; ‘ My Lord, it is because we are in earnest.’ And indeed whoever is in earnest when he speaks in public, provided he be free from any defects, in the fundamental parts of delivery, will answer every end of elocution in these times, and pass for an excellent speaker ; and I am much deceived, if it is not to this point chiefly, that those who are reckoned the best speakers at this day,



day, are indebted for their reputation. Sure I am, that the advantages which the Methodist teachers, have obtained over the regular clergy, in seducing so many of their flocks from them, have been wholly owing to this. For were they to read their nonsense from notes, in the same cold, artificial manner, that so many of the clergy deliver rational discourses, it is to be presumed, that there are few of mankind, such ideots, as to become their followers; or who would not prefer sense to nonsense, if they were cloathed in the same garb.

EXCEPTING these wild orators, we have few instances, of any public speakers, who even seem to be in earnest; and on that account, those few who are really so, raise to themselves a proportionate degree of admiration. Upon a late public occasion at Oxford, there was a remarkable proof given of this. A person, of the first station \* in the University, was to address, by virtue of his office, the new elected Chancellour, in the public theatre, and in the presence of many thousands. He was no way remarkable for elocution, and this was perhaps the first time, he found himself engaged, in a scene of this kind. As he was a man of a speculative turn, he had an uncommon share, even in private company, of that awkward bashfulness, which is usually the attendant of those, who have much commerce with books, and little with the world. Those of his acquaintance therefore, were in pain for him; and they who knew him only by character, did not expect that he would acquit himself well. But all were pleasingly disappointed. As he had no art, he did not attempt to use any. He was really, and at heart pleased, with the election of the Chancellour, and expressed himself accordingly. He received him, with the air of the same cordial joy, that a man would shew, on the arrival of a long wished

\* The Vice Chancellour.



for, noble guest, under his roof, whose presence would make a sort of little jubilee in the family. His tones were such, as result from a glad heart; his eyes sparkled with pleasure, and his whole countenance and gesture were in exact unison. No one was at leisure to examine whether any part of his elocution might have been more graceful; it was just, it was forcible, it moved every one. His easy, natural, and unaffected manner, which perhaps was scarcely ever seen before by any of his auditors, in a public speaker, excited bursts of universal applause; not from prostituted hands, in support of party-opinions; but from hearts, that felt themselves agitated, by a participation of kindred feelings, resulting from his manner, independent of his matter.

BUT that the natural manner of delivery, should have such force, and pass for the most excellent kind amongst us, who have never made any attempt to study elocution as an art; is no matter of surprise, when we consider, that even amongst the Romans, after the art had been introduced, and numbers applied themselves closely to the study and practice of it, there was still great attention given, and high honour paid to such speakers, as relied entirely on nature, and had their delivery wholly governed by their emotions. Cicero in his book *de Oratore*, mentions an instance of this kind in Q. Varius, whom he represents, as utterly rude, and ungraceful in his manner, to the last degree; yet as one who had obtained a great weight at Rome, by his power of speaking, such as it was.

THIS point being allowed, it is evidently in the power of every one, to deliver himself with such force, and acquire such a reputation for speaking, as he is entitled to by his natural talents. There are few public speakers who have not two kinds of delivery; one for public, the other for private use. The one, artificial and constrain-



ed; the other, natural and easy. There is therefore nothing more required, than to change one manner for another; to unlearn the former, and substitute the latter in its room; of which, each individual is already master. Had he indeed a new manner to acquire, as well as to get rid of the old, the difficulty would be great; but when he has only to unlearn a bad habit, and has another ready to substitute in its room, it requires nothing but attention, and regular information of his errors, when he falls into them.

BESIDE the sources of artificial delivery before mentioned, there is another, with which most public speakers are unknowingly infected. I mean certain peculiarities which prevail, in each of the three different species of delivery, in the pulpit, the senate-house, and the bar, both in phraseology and manner; and these, can not be too studiously avoided. They have each their particular idioms, and abound with expletives and repletives, accompanied with motions, equally unimportant, and insignificant. These probably, owed their origin, to imitation of the faults (for faults are easily imitated) of some of the admired speakers, in the several branches. They have been adopted into such general use by each society, that it is hard for any member of those bodies, to avoid catching them, unless he be upon his guard against them. But as it is easy to know those singularities, so the being guarded against them, will prevent new members from falling into them; and attention and resolution, will soon get the better of them in those, who are already infected. It may be said, that custom has so far sanctified these singularities, that the avoiding them is not an object of any moment; and that it is at least a matter of indifference, whether they are used or not. It is true indeed, that general use has rendered them so familiar, that their deformity is not perceived; and the practice of them is attended with no blame. But on the other hand, he who avoids them is sure



to be commended for it, and makes himself distinguished on that very account. He that is contented, if he escapes without censure, may freely indulge himself in the use of them; but he that would obtain praise, will not surely lose so cheap an opportunity of purchasing it, as that of avoiding general and apparent faults, which will cost him no more pains than a resolution to do so.

BUT a case may be put, that supposing a man has, by indulging early bad habits, or from any other cause, acquired a manner of delivery in private life, and in his usual discourse, very disagreeable and disgusting; supposing he should have a habit of distorting his features, of using awkward and extravagant gestures, and uttering strange and discordant tones; is he not in such a case, to endeavour to get the better of these, whenever he speaks in public, and consequently to avoid that manner, which from habit, may be called his natural one? My answer is, that if he thinks of reforming this only in public, he begins at the wrong end, and will never be able to effect what he desires. His business is, to set about a reformation of all such faults, first, in private life; if by his own attention to it, and the constant information of his friends, he should get the better of them there, of course he will be without them also in public. But if he should continue regardless of his private manner, and be only studious of correcting what is amiss in public, he will find habit too powerful for him; and the very attention which he pays to that point, will prevent his entering with earnestness into his subject, and give a constrained air to all that he delivers. So that tho' a man can not give too much attention in private, to the correction of faulty habits, yet he should utterly forget that he has any such when he speaks in public; for by such recollection and attention, he will lose force, without acquiring grace; which is incompatible with any apparent solicitude about it. Nor need a person, even tho' he should



not be able, wholly to subdue habits of that sort, be in any pain about it; as the frequency of faults, and singularities in that way, pleads their excuse. *Defendit numerus. Veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.* He is kept in countenance by numbers, who partaking of similar faults, mutually give and receive indulgence from each other. Singularity of manner in any speaker only strikes at first. After a few times, it is no longer taken notice of by the hearers; and if a stranger observes upon it to such as are his usual auditors, the common answer is, 'Oh, that's *his way*;' and this puts an end to all farther remarks. Faults which from constant habit appear natural to a man, have an ease with them which takes away their disagreeableness, when one is a little used to them; but faults from affectation, or imitating the manner of others, are for ever disgusting, because they are apparently artificial. To contract bad habits of one's own is rather the fault of the times, than the man. He is unconscious of them; he continues in them, thro' want of instruction, and information: Few, or none are without them; they meet readily therefore with indulgence. But to imitate and adopt the faulty manner of others, is a voluntary act, it is done with the eyes open; and as it betrays an error in judgement, will not admit of the same excuse, nor be allowed the same indulgence, by people of any discernment.

UPON the whole, there are two kinds of language, necessary to all, who would wish to answer the end of public speaking. The one is, the language of ideas; by which the thoughts which pass in a man's mind, are manifested to others; and this language is composed chiefly of words properly ranged, and divided into sentences. The other, is the language of emotions; by which the effects that those thoughts have upon the mind of the speaker, in exciting the passions, affections, and all manner of feelings, are not only made known,



known, but communicated to others; and this language is composed of tones, looks, and gesture. The office of a public speaker is, to instruct, to please, and to move. If he does not instruct, his discourse is impertinent; and if he does not please, he will not have it in his power to instruct, for he will not gain attention; and if he does not move, he will not please, for where there is no emotion, there can be no pleasure. To move therefore, should be the first great object of every public speaker; and for this purpose, he must use the language of emotions, not that of ideas alone, which of itself has no power of moving. It is evident, in the use of the language of emotions, that he who is properly moved, and at the same time delivers himself, in such tones, as delight the ear with their harmony; accompanied by such looks and gestures, as please the eye with their grace; whilst the understanding also perceives their propriety; is in the first class, and must be accounted a master. In this case, the united endeavours of art and nature, produce that degree of perfection, which is no other way to be obtained, in any thing that is the workmanship of man. Next to him, is the speaker, who gives way to his emotions, without thinking of regulating their signs; and trusts to the force of nature, unsollicitous about the graces of art. And the worst is he, who uses tones and gestures, which he has borrowed from others, and which, not being the result of his feelings, are likely to be misapplied, and to be void of propriety, force, and grace. But he who is utterly without all language of emotions, who confines himself to the mere utterance of words, without any concomitant signs, is not to be classed at all amongst public speakers. The very worst abuse of such signs, is preferable to a total want of them; as it has at least a stronger resemblance to nature. There is no emotion of the mind, which nature does not make an effort to manifest, by some of those signs; and therefore a total suppression of those signs, is of all other states, apparently the



the most unnatural. And this, it is to be feared, is too much the state of the pulpit elocution in general, in the Church of England. On which account, there never was perhaps a religious sect upon earth, whose hearts were so little engaged in the act of public worship as the members of that Church. To be pleased, we must feel; and we are pleased with feeling. The Presbyterians are moved; the Methodists are moved; they go to their meetings, and tabernacles, with delight. The very Quakers are moved. Fantastical, and extravagant as the language of their emotions is, yet still they are moved by it, and they love their form of worship for that reason. Whilst much the greater part of the members of the English Church, are either banished from it thro' disgust, or reluctantly attend the service as a disagreeable duty.

END of the LECTURES.





T W O

DISSERTATIONS

ON THE

STATE of LANGUAGE

In DIFFERENT NATIONS.





THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

IN SENATE

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF LANDS

AND MINES

FOR THE YEAR 1870



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# DISSERTATION I.\*

*On the State of Language in OLD GREECE and the Means  
by which it was brought to Perfection.*

**I**N my last lecture, I concluded all that I thought most necessary to be said, upon the several heads mentioned in my proposals. My chief object in this course, has been to point out the principal errors, and defects, in the several branches of elocution; and at the same time, to propose the most effectual means of correcting those errors, and supplying those defects, in its present deplorable state; as we have neither any treatises on the subject, to assist us in the speculative, nor masters, in the practical part.

BUT as I believe, there are not any of my hearers, who do not wish that this matter might be carried farther, and that the art of speaking might be introduced into this country, and established upon such a sure foundation, as to be equally open to all who are desirous of attaining it; I have purposely reserved this last discourse, to pave the way for an opening to a new course of lectures, which I intend to give in order to answer that end. And I have reason to hope from the nature of the course proposed, that all who shall be at the

\* This Dissertation was delivered, as the eighth Lecture, closing the preceding course on Elocution.



pains of examining it, will entertain a more favourable opinion of the practicability of the design, than they could have done from any thing hitherto offered on the subject.

IN order to this, the business of this day, shall be to trace the rise and progress of elocution, in the country where it first had its birth, and arrived at its maturity; that we may be enabled to judge, whether if we apply to the same methods used there, we may not hope to attain equal perfection.

OF all the countries in the world, Greece seems to have been, constitutionally, the best formed, to bring the human language to perfection. Soon after the inhabitants were civilized, that region was divided into several small states, each of which had liberty for its object. Freemen, were not to be governed by force, like the vassals of despotism, but by persuasion. The power of persuasion therefore, was the greatest which could be possessed by any citizen; and the power of persuasion, depending upon the power of speech, language of course became the chief object of attention, to all who were ambitious of obtaining such power. And as, in order to persuade, it was necessary both to please, and move the multitude; that language, which in itself contained, the powers of pleasing and moving, was of course the most sought after, and cultivated. It is evident, that this could be no other than the language of nature; expressed in tones, looks, and gestures, which virtually contained those powers. In the first rude essays of oratory, we may therefore conclude, that such speakers, as had the greatest command of this language, had the greatest power of affecting, and therefore were esteemed the best.

To the bringing this language to perfection several points then contributed, which were not to be found since in other states. In  
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the first place, their attention was not divided, nor their judgements prejudiced, in favour of any other language, but that which was uttered by the organs of speech, accompanied with its natural signs. Writing was little known amongst them, and by those who knew it, was made no other use of than to assist the memory. There was no press going at that time, to furnish pamphlets for, or against any measure. There was no other general method of communication open, but by the living voice; and he who could not manifest his sentiments by that, had no other way of making them known to the people.

IN the second place, they were under a necessity of taking nature for their guide, as their chief object was to move the human heart; which could be effected only by the use of such signs, as nature herself has furnished with the power of doing so.

AND lastly, in such free states, they had the means of supplying themselves with sufficient stores of this copious language, which were denied to others. The book of the living language was open to them, in the great volume of society; from which they might cull such expressions, as they found to contain most energy or grace. Amongst them, the free minds, unawed by fear, exerted all their vigour; gave way to every emotion; and every emotion was manifested by visible, or audible signs. Out of these therefore, might every observer cull for his own use, such as were most pleasing, or most expressive.

WHILST thus the language of nature was of course tending to perfection, that of the artificial kind was not neglected. And in the improvement of this also, nature was their guide. For tho' in words there is something wholly artificial and arbitrary, when we consider



them as combinations of letters to stand for signs of our ideas, yet it is nature that has furnished the elements, of which they are composed. Their number, kind, and proper use indeed she has not thought proper to communicate, by any intuitive or instinctive perception; but left it to the pains of man to find out these, on the same general principle, by which the improvement of all his nobler faculties is left to human industry. But as these elements differ from each other, in the two articles necessary to their formation, sound and time; some being pleasing to the ear, some harsh; some taking up a shorter time in pronouncing, some a longer; this natural distinction in the elements, must necessarily make one in words; some of which will therefore, in their own nature, be more fitted to certain purposes, than others. But of this the ear being the sole judge, who were so likely to attend to the just modulation of language, as those nations, amongst whom every thing of importance was carried on, thro' the means of language addressed to the ear; and to whom therefore it became necessary, that the ear should be pleased? Nature has shewn us that this cannot be done for any length of time, without variety, and proportion. Variety depends upon the number of different sounds which are uttered; and proportion upon the different degrees of time in which the sounds are made. The language therefore which has the greatest number of simple elements or letters, will be capable of the greatest variety of sounds; and those which abound in long and short sounds, will admit of the greatest variety of proportions. To such states therefore as I have been speaking of, these points became objects of attention; and accordingly we find that the Greeks had five vowels, when the Africans were contented with three; and each of these five vowels had two quantities, long and short, whilst those of barbarous nations were always long. But as the force and beauty of this variety of sounds, and their proportions, depended upon their being properly mixed  
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and blended in their several combinations; and the understanding as well as the ear was to be consulted on this occasion, since words are not merely sounds, but are also types of ideas; let us see whether nature herself did not point out the way, to blend and proportion these properly, in speech. Those sounds which are most pleasing to the ear, are in their own nature most congruous to such ideas as are most pleasing to the mind; as those of a harsher kind, to such as are disagreeable. And with respect to quantity or time, as it is natural to dwell upon such words as convey the most important ideas, so is it to precipitate such as are indifferent. In the one, the longer vowels and liquids, should predominate; in the other, their contraries. In both articles, the intermediate or indifferent, should be proportionally marked, by a due intermixture. It was by this law of nature, not by chance, caprice, or fashion, that the pronunciation of the Greek was first moulded, and afterwards improved to such propriety and beauty of sound, as was to be perceived in no other.

THEIR language, thus happily founded upon natural principles, was for the same reason, in a continual state of improvement, till it arrived at perfection. Whilst Greece maintained its independence, all measures were taken in consequence of public deliberations and debates; in which of course the most powerful speakers bore sway. To make their sons masters of language, was therefore one of the chief objects of all the principal citizens. They did not leave it to chance, but from their earliest years, had them instructed in it, by skilful persons. We learn from Pausanias, that schools were opened for this purpose even so early as the time of Theseus. And we find from Homer, that the practice of eloquence and arms, formed the whole system of education, in the time of the Trojan war. He makes old Phœnix say to Achilles, that his father Peleus had sent him as his tutor, *in order to make him an able speaker, and a skilful*  
warriour.



*warriour.* And indeed as the liberty of all Greece, depended upon the wisdom of the councils, of the united or confederated states, and their valour in executing them, against the enormous power of Asia; these must have been naturally, the study and employment of all their youth. Nor need we wonder, that eloquence had made so great a progress, as Homer describes it to have done, in the time of the Trojan war; of which he has given such noble, and different models, in the persons of Nestor, Ulysses, and Menelaus.

IT was this necessity of perpetual confederacies between the several states, either against each other, in their domestic wars; or in their union against the common enemy, the mighty Persian, which afterwards kept alive, and promoted, the study of eloquence, and improvement of language. The ablest speakers were always employed on this occasion, from the time that Ulysses was dispatched to the court of Peleus, to that in which Demosthenes was sent ambassador to Thebes. This must have excited the highest emulation amongst them, and the utmost contention of excelling in that art. And this circumstance it was, which obliged them always to take nature for their guide, in all the successive improvements made in elocution, 'till it arrived at its utmost height. An advantage, which was no where to be had, but in the case of several, independent states, speaking one common language, and having a free intercourse with each other. This necessarily prevented any fantastical mode, any merely fashionable manner of utterance, which might casually take rise in a particular state, from spreading, or arriving at an invincible force, from custom. This of course, made all the speakers, in the several countries, search out for such ornaments and improvements, as had their foundation in nature only; as no other could produce any effect, upon the unprejudiced hearers of different states; and no other therefore, were likely to be adopted into general use.

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IT is true, the several states, tenaciously adhered to their several dialects, in their common use of speech ; but this was only an unimportant difference, in some small points in the structure of the artificial language, a thing merely arbitrary. But in all the forcible and important articles of natural language, in the use of tones, looks, and gestures, they were agreed. Besides, the different dialects of Greece, were not like ours, corruptions, or deviations from propriety ; no, they were rather peculiar beauties, which each state was proud of, and cultivated with care ; and nothing but vanity in the other states, could prevent their being adopted into general use, and all made part of the mass of one language. And we find that several of their most eminent writers, made this use of them with great success ; and that their works were much ornamented, by the agreeable variety which this introduced into them.

BESIDE the causes already mentioned, the general assembly of the Amphictiones, and the universal one of all Greeks at the Olympic games, where some of the noblest productions of their writers were recited, did not a little contribute to give sanction to what was pure and natural ; to check the growth of what was merely artificial and fantastical ; and spread an universal good taste.

As it has been laid down for a principle, that nature has furnished only the animal passions, with their concomitant signs and expressions, in a suitable degree ; it may be said, that the marks belonging to the emotions of the mind must be chiefly the work of art, and in affixing them caprice or fancy must bear great sway. But it must be remembered always, that tho' nature has not furnished our nobler faculties, with a language ready formed, as in the animal passions ; yet has she furnished the matter of which it is to be composed, and left it to man to modify that matter as he should think proper ;



proper; in which, as in all other investigations of the intellectual kind, his industry, under the guidance of his reason, was to find out, what modification of that matter, would be most pleasing and powerful, or in other words most consonant to nature. To guide him in this enquiry, she not only afforded him a sufficient light in reason itself if improved; but furnished him with a perfect model, or pattern, for him to copy from. She had clearly pointed out to him in the animal language, that tones, looks, and gestures only, could denote or communicate the animal passions; consequently it was as clearly pointed out to him, to make use of those as signs of all mental emotions. In the animal passions, she had suited the signs in the exactest manner to their several degrees, from the smallest perception, to the utmost violence of each. This gave the lesson to man to settle all the proportions of the others, in the same exact degree. Nature made the signs of those passions universally intelligible, being the same in all men; this shewed the way to societies, to make the signs of mental emotions as generally understood, by an agreement, and habit of using the same signs universally. This, from experience we see, might with proper attention easily be done; because it is effected without trouble in the artificial language of words, by which our ideas are communicated; as without such steady agreement in the use of the signs, discourse would be unintelligible. The same agreement therefore, in the constant use of the same signs of the emotions, would make them equally understood by all.

BUT there is this important difference between settling the mode of the language of tones, looks, and gestures, and that of articulate sounds, that the former have a power from nature herself of producing emotions of some kind or other, but the latter have no natural power of exciting ideas. Consequently the combinations of the latter may be much more an arbitrary work than of the former.

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Any combination of letters, however uncouth, may fairly stand as the mark of any idea, and in that capacity only fully answer its end. But it is not so with respect to tones, &c. for were those which in their own nature are suited to express lively and agreeable emotions, adapted to the words of sorrow and distress; and so *vice versa*, they would not only fail of their end, but the two languages would counteract each other. Yet thro' neglect and custom, discord of this kind has been introduced into several nations; the tones accompanying some languages, appearing to a foreign ear, as if the speakers were always in distress; and in others, as if they were always in rage. And indeed, thro' a neglect of attending to this language of nature, the tones and gestures accompanying the speech of most nations in the world, are either fantastical, discordant, or insignificant. But it was not so in the land of eloquence; there it was of the utmost importance, that all the declarative signs of the mental emotions, should be as exact, and as justly regulated, upon rational grounds, drawn from observations of nature, as those of the animal passions; in order that they might produce the same effects, and be as universally intelligible. Nor did it require art and pains, or diving deep into the mysteries of nature, to effect this; it was accomplished by practice alone, long before speculation was thought of. It has been already observed, that nature herself supplied the matter; no one who felt any simple emotion, if free from the influence of fashion or habit, could be at a loss for the kind of expression, by which it was to be manifested; nature herself furnished him with that, as in the animal passions; the only difference was, that in the latter, she adjusted the exact proportions also; in the former, that was left to the care of man. In the latter, they were self-evident, and produced analogous effects in the nicest degree: in the former, they required some degree of compact and common use, as in words, to make their precise import known, and to produce proportional effects. But as

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there are also complex emotions of the mind, made out of several simple ones, here it was necessary that art should step in, blending properly the several degrees of tones belonging to the several simple ones, whereof the complex one was formed according to their several degrees of ascendancy. And hence arises another reason in the nature of things, that the proportioning the several degrees of expression in the mental emotions, must have been left chiefly to man, beside that already mentioned, which is, that the animal passions are all simple, and might therefore have all their signs regularly settled by nature, in their due proportions; but many of the mental emotions, are complex, and made up of the united energies, of sense, intellect, and fancy; to blend their several expressions therefore, must have been left to man, unless his free agency had been totally destroyed.

To hit upon these exact proportions therefore, it may be supposed that all public speakers in the land of eloquence, tried their utmost skill; and experiment was the test of this. Those which produced the strongest effects, and excited in the hearers most powerfully, those emotions which they were manifestly intended to rouse by the speaker, were allowed to be the best, adopted as such, and universally imitated. Thus, in process of time, such tones, looks, and gestures, as were most consonant to nature, had the strongest energy, and were best fitted to their several emotions; were universally received, understood, and felt; and became as generally used, and with as little variation, as words.

By these means, even in the midst of wars and tumults, did language and elocution, attain their utmost growth and strength. But still to render them completely perfect, and fitted for every occasion in life, some of the nicer delicacies, the finer strokes of finishing, and



last polish were wanting. This was reserved for the workmanship of peace, to which the overthrow of Xerxes made way. Being now freed from the dread of the Persian power, the Greeks had leisure to apply themselves to the peaceful arts, to the study of the sciences, and extension of commerce. These, in Athens particularly, from the nature of her constitution, flourished to an eminent degree. Eloquence threw aside her sword and shield, and wore a softer form in the robe of peace. All the tender domestic sensations, all the delicacies of refined sentiment, all the lively sallies of fancy, and all the powers of ridicule, were indulged by a free and animated people. To these emotions also, were their several marks, both natural and artificial, assigned; upon the same principles, by the same experiment, and in the same exact proportions as those before mentioned.

FROM their unbounded liberty, every one freely indulged his genius; yet was every one confined to that sphere, for which nature herself destined him, by the talents with which she endowed him: and this arose from the impossibility of succeeding in any attempts, for which they were not qualified, amongst a people of such exquisite discernment; as well as from the dread of ridicule, which never failed to attend such attempts. Thus was every faculty of man to be seen in that society carried to the utmost perfection; as the industry of each individual, was employed in improving such, as he possessed in the most eminent degree.

To follow nature was the universal rule, and the way was open and visible to all. There were no prejudices from custom to cast a mist over their sight: from their infancy, genuine, unsophisticated nature was before their eyes; and they grew up to as familiar an acquaintance with her, as with any external objects. Their distinguishing faculty in this respect, was in them a sensation, not



a reflection ; a perception not a judgement. And their knowledge of her, intuitive, not demonstrative. And whence came this, but that she was really manifested to the senses ? They saw her, they heard her, they felt her, in her universally intelligible, and expressive language. So that were it possible to look into the human mind, they could not with more certainty know the emotions which passed there. Hence all the springs of the passions were open to them, and they knew how to wind them up, or relax them at pleasure. Hence arose their accurate knowledge of the human heart, which they studied in the original, in the great volume of society ; written in characters, formed by nature correspondent to their archetypes, which could not be mistaken or misunderstood. They never were so vainly employed as to search for it in books, in the artificial characters of human invention, which have no affinity or natural connection with their archetypes, have no stamp of truth, wearing the same form in falsehood as in truth, and utterly incapable of representing or communicating emotions, by any power in themselves. But to this have we been unfortunately reduced by the loss of the language of nature. To which the invention of printing, and the consequential application to book language only, has chiefly contributed.

THUS accustomed from their childhood to nothing but what was pure, just, and natural ; the knowledge of all that was right or wrong in delivery, grew up with them, and became as it were part of their frame. They wanted no rules, no pieces of criticism, to direct them ; they relied not on any slow process, of at best doubtful judgement, which may ever be misled by sophistry ; no, they had a quicker and surer criterion ; they judged only from their feeling. Whatever was right, just, and proper in delivery, was in unison with that master string ; and produced concord. Whatever was otherwise, jarred upon it, and created discord. Thus each carried about



about him a touch-stone of truth, in his own breast; and upon comparing notes, they found it to be true as the needle to the pole. We are assured from all their writers that there never was any difference of opinion in this respect, between the vulgar and the great; between the learned and illiterate. Simple, uncorrupt nature, felt and judged alike in all. The least impropriety in tone, look, or gesture was instantly felt by them, in the same manner as false concords in grammar, or false spelling is perceived by those who are trained to the knowledge of book language amongst us; but with this difference, that the former must have excited a stronger disgust, as it was an offence against nature; whereas the other, is only an error in art. Nor was it in the natural language only, that they became thus accurately skilled; their judgements were as nice and correct, in the artificial language also. We are told, that if there was any fault committed, in pronouncing a syllable in the least degree longer or shorter than its true quantity, or the least failure in the proportion of any instituted tone or gesture, belonging to any word, phrase, or sentence, the whole assembly would cry out against it. And as in the former, their nice discernment had its foundation wholly in nature, so in the latter, it had its foundation partly in nature, and partly in custom; like the subject about which their perception was employed, being compounded of both. And custom, by the concurrent agreement of all speakers in the use of those signs, being as uniform and general, as in those of natural language, afforded the same sure and general criterion. And thus did these Ancients really and truly possess that discerning power, that intuitive perception of right and wrong, without waiting for the deductions of judgement, which the Moderns have in vain pretended to, in that fantastical faculty which they say they have found out in the human constitution, and to which they have given the name of Taste. A term, grown into common use without any precise idea annexed to it.



it. A term, which has puzzled the brains of many ingenious men to explain its meaning, hitherto to no purpose; as in the several essays which have been written on the subject, no two writers have agreed in their idea, definition, or description of it. A term, which from the capricious use of it sufficiently shows the chimerical origin of the faculty to which it is referred; being in truth a creature of fancy, without any existence in nature; as obscure and unintelligible as the occult qualities in philosophy. And as a creature of fancy, is not only different in different nations, but in most individuals of the same nation. Changing perpetually like the fashions of dress. And yet this is the principle, which the Moderns would make the universal criterion of what is right in the arts. How different was the criterion of the Ancients founded on nature! It was the same in all, and operated in the same way. The different nations of the world who visited them, at once saw its beauty, and felt its force. Their works which remain built upon this principle, raise admiration in all mankind, in proportion as their prejudices are removed, and they are rendered capable of knowing nature in her true shape. They are addressed to the judgements and hearts of all men, and will remain whilst there is any just understanding, any sensibility in the world, or an eternal rule of right known. Whilst the works of taste will perish with every change of taste; which from a love of novelty, will be brought about by every new artist, of sufficient talents to captivate the fancy in a higher degree, or even in a different way from his predecessors. But we need not wonder that a fantastic principle was found out to judge of fantastic arts, (for such in fact has been their state amongst the Moderns) when we find the dominion of fancy so far extended, as that risibility has been constituted sovereign over rationality, and ridicule made the standard of moral truth.

But



BUT to return to the Ancients, whose nice and true discernment arose from their perpetual view of nature in her genuine shape. How difficult must it have been, for a public speaker, to have pleased an auditory of such exact judgement, and exquisite sensibility! To articulate and pronounce well; to deliver proper sentiments, cloathed in suitable words, in a distinct and audible manner; were so far from being considered as things praise worthy, that the smallest defects in any of these articles were looked upon as disgraceful; and the person who laboured under any faults of this kind, was utterly disqualified from appearing in public. Of this even the great Demosthenes himself afforded a remarkable instance; for notwithstanding the immense power of his genius, (which afterwards broke out with such astonishing force) in his first attempts to speak in public, he was hissed out of the assembly, on account of some defects of that kind; and he did not dare to appear before them again, 'till by incessant labour, he had got the better of those faults. Nor need we wonder at this, when we consider that all the essential properties of delivery, were endemious at Athens: The commonest citizens, in their common discourse, never offended against propriety; and in that respect, the meanest, were on a par with their most eloquent orators. To give an instance of their great nicety in one article, the well known story of Theophrastus, and the Athenian herbwoman will be sufficient. He had resided long at Athens, and piqued himself upon having acquired the utmost delicacy of Attic speech; but one day upon asking that herbwoman a question, he had the mortification to hear himself in answer called, a Stranger. And upon enquiring how she discovered him to be such, she answered, that 'he spoke too Attically.' How nice must have been the distinguishing faculty of the people in general, when even a right pronunciation, was not sufficient, to make a man pass upon one of the lowest of them for a native,



native, only because it was not done with the same ease, which accompanied the speech of all the natives.

To please such a people therefore all the powers of oratory were necessary in the highest degree; and these comprehend all the noblest faculties that nature has given to man, improved to the utmost, by skill and practice. We find that they admitted none to be in the number of great orators, who had not an universal knowledge, of every thing that regarded man, in his social, and political state. It was required that he should be able to produce this knowledge, whenever called upon, without difficulty or hesitation. That he should be instantly able to disclose his thoughts, upon any subject of public debate, ranged in the clearest order, cloathed in the properest words, and those words disposed in such manner, as should at once enforce the meaning, and charm the ear. That he should be a perfect master of the passions, and know how to touch each string belonging to them, with the same nicety as he who touched those of the lyre. That he should thus be able to excite in his hearers all kinds of emotions according to the nature of his subject. That he should inspire them with cheerfulness, or cloud them with melancholy; make them laugh or weep, love or hate, envy or despise, at his pleasure; that he should move them to pity, or rouse them to anger; excite alternately hope and fear, shame and penitence, in short every passion of man. Besides this there must run thro' the discourse a certain inexpressible grace and elegance of manner; delicate strokes upon occasion of wit, and pleasantry, and the whole seasoned with that Attic salt, which alone could make it palatable, however good the food. When added to all this, we consider, that this was to be done with so much ease, that there was not to be the least appearance of art, the smallest particle of which, like leaven, would sower



the whole lump, we must allow that to succeed in this way, must have been the highest effort of human nature. Such indeed it was considered, and therefore proportional pains were taken to qualify all such as had talents in that way, for the arduous task; as it was the sole object in view in their whole course of education, the knowledge of the military art only excepted. And what nobler object could there have been in view, than that which required, that all the faculties of man should be improved to the highest pitch of perfection? Or what happier constitution of a state, than that, which conferred power only on such as had a natural right to it, by pre-eminence of faculties, and abilities to serve the state? Nor was this left to opinion, nor could cunning and art avail in obtaining this preference; no, the several candidates were obliged to display their abilities before judges of the most exquisite discernment, who gave them credit for nothing in point of talents, which they were not able to manifest. Outward appearances and shew of wisdom availed not there; a man was obliged to produce all the wealth of his mind to view, and he was rated according to the sum he produced. No one could therefore pass for rich, who was not so. Hence their avidity of knowledge was unbounded, and consequently of power to communicate that knowledge in the readiest, clearest, and most forcible manner. For without knowledge, speech would have but little weight; without power of speech, knowledge would have but little value. The necessary union of these in their highest perfection, which are the great ornaments of man, and which are the strong characteristics that distinguish the human from the animal species, naturally brought about 'that golden period,' to use the words of a learned and ingenious writer, 'which seemed a providential event, in honour of human nature, to shew to what perfection the species might ascend.' How far the communication by the living voice, and



the consequential use and improvement of the language of nature, as well as that of art, contributed to produce this perfection, every one may determine for himself from what has been laid before him on that subject.

## DISSERTATION



## DISSERTATION II.\*

*On the State of Language in other Countries, but more particularly in our own, and its Consequences.*

**M**Y last course concluded with an account of the rise and progress of Elocution in Greece, and the consequential improvement of the Greek language to the utmost state of perfection whereof it was capable. I shall introduce the present course, by taking a view of the state of language in other countries, beginning first with the most savage.

As language is nothing else but a collection of symbols of ideas, and emotions, which pass in the mind of man, it is evident that it must correspond to the state of the mind. In countries where people have but few ideas, they will of course have but few words. Where they have but few exertions of the intellect or fancy, they will have as few marks of those exertions. Amongst savages therefore the language belonging to the operations of the understanding, or fancy, is scarcely known. Their ideas extend but little beyond the necessaries of life, and their words are circumscribed by their

\* This Dissertation was intended as an introduction to a Course of Lectures, not yet delivered, on the English language, and is now first offered to the public.



ideas. Accordingly we read of nations who have no terms for number beyond three. As the natives of such countries, are little more than mere animals, so have they scarcely the use of any other but their animal faculties; and they have little more benefit from the use of speech, than what animals have in the natural language of the passions, which they enjoy in common with them, and in equal perfection. The cause of the low state of human nature in such countries, is in general the difficulty that the inhabitants find in providing daily subsistence, which, thro' want of the useful arts, generally employs the chief part of their time, and leaves no room for the exertion, or improvement of their nobler faculties. As they also generally live in a state of danger, the guarding against that, and taking care of self-preservation, employs whatever intervals of time there may be, not filled up with the providing of food.

AMONGST Barbarians born under less unhappy circumstances, who being supplied more liberally with the necessaries of life by the bounty of nature, and living in a state of greater security, there is leisure for the exertion of other faculties. In this time of leisure, when the animal appetites are satisfied, the mind being unrestrained by fear, and the understanding unenlightened by knowledge, fancy of course exerts itself, and displays the rude powers of the imagination, in their public sports, and festivities.

BUT as the fallies of fancy, when not under the direction of the intellect, are wild and extravagant, their language, or expressions, must be so too; and however use may make them pleasing to the natives, to all of other countries they appear absurd and ridiculous. Of this our writers of voyages and travels, have furnished us with instances in abundance. The customs of these countries, not being founded in general, either on necessity or reason, but chiefly on caprice,



caprice, from the fancy's bearing chief sway in forming them, are much more numerous and irregular than in the countries before described; and conformable to their customs is their language, more copious, more fantastical.

IN states where the introduction of the arts produces trade and commerce, the ideas of the people multiply in proportion to the number of objects about which their minds are conversant; and their words, or language of ideas, increase in the same degree. If trade be carried no farther than to supply the conveniencies of life in a moderate degree, and it should require the exertion of constant industry to effect this, there will be little room in such states, for the improvement and exercise of the nobler faculties of the intellect and imagination, and their language, will be proportionally defective. If thro' the extensiveness of trade and commerce, much wealth should be pour'd into such countries, and the superfluity of wealth should be converted to the purposes of the grosser kind of luxury, in gratifying chiefly the sensual appetites, there also the improvements of the understanding and fancy will be neglected, and the language of the inhabitants accordingly circumscribed by their sordid ideas. Such was the case of the Carthaginians of old, of whose language, as not worth preserving, no trace remains; and amongst whom we never heard of any famous philosopher, poet, or orator; nor of any celebrated masters in the polite arts. Very similar to the ancient Carthaginians are the modern Dutch.

BESIDE these several states, there have been enormous empires in the world, subject to despotic rule. In governing the subjects of such empires, their reason is not to be applied to, nor consequently their intellectual faculties cultivated. All their passions also, but that of fear, must be kept under; they are therefore not to be governed



verned by persuasion, and thence the talents of persuasion become unnecessary. Force only can support tyranny, and mere brutal force is in the multitude: but fear will destroy all use of force, and turn the ballance of power in favour of the few. Fear resides in the imagination; over that faculty therefore is the ascendancy to be obtained. For this purpose an order of men is instituted, dependant on the tyrant, who by religious fear mould the imagination of the multitude to what form they please, render them unconscious of their strength, and break them into tame beasts of burthen. The people in such states of course fall into three classes; the multitude, or plebeians, who in the midst of natural plenty are reduced nearly to the want of savages, and are almost in an equal state of ignorance: The few, or nobles, to whom the tyrant delegates part of his power, and a disproportionate share of property; who riotously wallow in that plenty, which arises from depriving the multitude of that share of the goods of nature which was their due; and indulge themselves in sensual gratifications, and such amusements of fancy as are customary in their country: And lastly the order of priesthood, whose chief employment it is to cultivate their own intellectual faculties, so far only, as is necessary to procure to themselves sufficient knowledge to keep the people in awe, and to preserve their own power, as well as that of the tyrant, as mutual supports to each other.

IN such countries, it is evident, that none of the nobler faculties of the mind, can be brought to any degree of perfection. The rich and the poor are nearly in an equal state of ignorance; a moderate degree of knowledge therefore in the third order, will be sufficient to keep the other two in a state of subjection. And as the end which they seek by such knowledge, is power; not over the understanding, which would require that of the intellectual kind, and such as is founded in reason; not over the passions, which would demand that  
which



which is persuasive, and founded in nature; but over the imagination, which is ever most powerfully wrought upon, by that which is marvellous, and unintelligible; their labours are not employed in acquiring an insight into such things as have truth and nature for their foundation, in order to convince the understanding, or move the heart; but either in framing such systems, founded upon chimerical principles, the creatures of their own fancy, as would make the strongest impression on the fancies of others; or if they dive into the study of nature, it is only to obtain a knowledge of such secrets in natural philosophy, as may countenance their pretensions to magic, amongst a people utterly ignorant of cause and effect. Accordingly the secrets of an unknown world, judicial astrology, divination, religious rites and ceremonies, natural magic, &c. seem to have made up the chief part of the knowledge, to be found in the order of priesthood in all such countries. Such was the state of things in the great empires of the East, and their language was suitable to the state of things. This has been well described, by the ingenious author of a Philosophical Enquiry into language, or universal grammar. He says, ‘The Eastern world, from the earliest days, has been at all times, the seat of enormous monarchy. On them fair liberty never shed its genial influence. If at any time civil discords arose among them, (and arise there did innumerable,) the contest was never about the form of their government, (for this was an object about which the combatants had no conception,) it was all from the poor motive of, who should be their master; whether a Cyrus or an Artaxerxes, a Mahomet, or a Mustapha. Such was their condition! And what was the consequence? Their ideas became consonant to their servile state, and their words became consonant to their servile ideas. The great distinction for ever in their fight was that of tyrant and slave; the most unnatural one conceivable, and the most susceptible of pomp, and empty exaggeration. Hence they

‘ talked



‘ talked of kings, as gods; and of themselves, as of the meanest and  
‘ most abject reptiles. Nothing was either great or little, in mode-  
‘ ration, but every sentiment was heightened by incredible hyperbole.  
‘ Thus tho’ they sometimes ascended into the great and magnificent,  
‘ they as frequently degenerated into the tumid and bombast. The  
‘ Greeks too of Asia became infected by their neighbours, who were  
‘ often at times not only their neighbours, but their masters; and  
‘ hence that luxuriance of the Asiatic style, unknown to the chaste  
‘ eloquence, and purity of Athens.

FROM a review of all the nations of antiquity, we shall find that the human language was but little advanced towards perfection, excepting amongst the Greeks and Romans. The different forms of the different languages of the world, necessarily arose from the different forms into which the human mind was moulded in the several countries, of which language was the copy. And the mind took its form from the different degrees of ascendancy, which the three great powers by which it is governed, obtained: I mean, Reason, Fancy, Passion. In Greece, where the rational faculties held their due rank, in governing the rest, and regulating the fancy and the passions; the human mind had its due shape, proportion, and completion; and correspondent to that was the size, symmetry, and beauty of their language, which was its transcript. Conviction, and persuasion, being amongst them essential to government, the language by which these ends were to be obtained, must have had its foundation in reason and nature. In countries, where passion had the ascendancy, the mind reduced to an almost brutal state, expressed itself chiefly in the language of brutes. In those states where the useful arts only were introduced, or the attention of the people was wholly engaged by commerce, the language was chiefly formed to answer those ends. And in those larger empires, where government

was



was carried on by working on the imagination, fancy bore the chief sway, and their language of course was fantastical.

To some of the above descriptions may all the languages of antiquity be referred, as well as those of the greatest part of nations, now inhabiting three quarters of the globe. But with regard to most of the languages at this time spoken in Europe, a new accidental cause produced remarkable effects, and turned things in a great measure out of the usual and natural course.

WHEN the Goths and Vandals had put an end to the language, as well as the empire of the Romans, the barbarous manners and speech of those rude nations, supplanted the more polished Roman, in all places where they made settlements, and the greatest part of Europe was reduced almost to the lowest state of barbarism; in which it remained during many ages. At length in the fifteenth century, the languages and arts of old Greece and Rome, had as it were a resurrection from the tombs in which they had so long been buried. This could not fail of effecting a remarkable change in the manners of those nations, where these languages and arts were introduced. From barbarous and brutal, they gradually became more polished and humane; and a long night of ignorance, was succeeded by a dawn of knowledge, which promised a glorious day. They were no longer circumscribed, by the narrow compass of ideas, with which their own language and customs might furnish them, like former countries in the same circumstances with themselves; no, they had an immense hoard of knowledge, the painful collection of ages, amongst the wisest and most civilized nations that had ever inhabited this globe, at once presented to view, and offered to their use. And happy had it been for these times if our ancestors had



known how to make a proper use of this treasure, so as to enrich themselves to the degree that they might have done, and to have handed down the noble inheritance to posterity. But instead of applying the funds of moral and political knowledge, found in the works of ancient authors, to the amendment of their several political states; instead of endeavouring to improve their own languages, by the noble models that were presented to them in those of Greece and Rome; men of the brightest parts, applied themselves every where to the acquirement of a critical skill in those languages, without any other end in view; and those of more solid understandings, were wholly ingrossed by the study of the worst part of ancient literature handed down to us, that of the Greek philosophy. Which being in general founded in error, as it occasioned endless controversies amongst the Ancients themselves, could not fail of producing the same effects amongst the Moderns. Thus a general spirit of pedantry in polite literature, from which the present times are far from being free, prevailed in Europe; and false systems of philosophy, which have been but lately overthrown, were every where established. How far this spirit of pedantry, and the general application of men of the greatest abilities, might have affected the political interests of the several states of Europe, is beyond my present purpose to enquire. I shall only observe by the way, that previous to the revival of letters, most of the governments established by our Gothic ancestors, were either free, or the people engaged in struggles for their freedom. But in all those countries where this ardour for ancient literature prevailed, they lost their liberty. And this was an effect naturally to be expected; for when men of the greatest abilities in a state, who alone are capable of opposing or frustrating the designs of an ambitious prince, withdraw from the active, to the contemplative life, they leave the field open for tyranny to enter, and range in at large.

BUT



BUT it is immediately to my point to enquire what effect this had upon language, and more particularly upon that of our own country. There are two kinds of language, by which the understanding may be enlightened, and the mind of man formed; the spoken, and the written: the one conveyed to the mind thro' the ear, by the voice uttering articulate sounds or words; the other presented to the eye, by means of visible marks. And it is generally thought that the one is equally well calculated to answer the end as the other. But as I have in my former course demonstrated that this opinion is erroneous, and that some of the noblest purposes of social communication, can not possibly be attained, by any language but that which proceeds from the living voice, it is a matter of great moment to consider, what the consequence must be, of giving the preference to written language in any country; more especially in ours, who have not only given the preference to it, but employed all our pains about that, neglecting utterly that which is spoken. A circumstance in which we differ from the practice of all civilized nations, ancient and modern.

IN order to this let us compare the conduct of the Greeks in this respect, with our own, article by article, and see what good and bad effects naturally and necessarily followed from the different methods.

The GREEKS

The ENGLISH

EMPLOYED their chief care and attention about their *living* tongue. ABOUT their written language.

*They* examined the power of sounds in the simple elements or letters with the utmost nicety; writing, without enquiring at all



whether they were long or short, into the power or nature of those smooth or harsh, strong or weak. sounds, so represented.

*They* learned to pronounce syllables and words with the greatest exactness of proportion both in time and sound, or quantity and quality.

*They* were taught to deliver their sentiments, or repeat the productions of others, in all the variety of tones, that nature or art had supplied, as expressions of the several passions, emotions of the mind, or exertions of the fancy; and these were accompanied with suitable looks and gesture. All three in unison to each other, and forming perfect harmony, by observing the nicest relative proportions in each.

THEIR public speakers could gain attention upon whatever topic they spoke, from the mere delight that people took in listening to them: But upon any subject that concerned the temporal interests of their auditors, they could work upon their passions in

*We* to pronounce syllables and words without regard either to the one or the other; and it is only necessary that the learners should shew by their pronunciation, that they know what syllables and words the letters stand for.

*We* are taught to deliver our own exercises, or the works of others, with little or no variation of voice, or else with some disagreeable discordant cant, applied to all sentences alike; without any accompaniments of looks or gesture, or else with such as are improper, ungraceful, or disgusting.

THE most numerous body of our public speakers, who have their choice of all manner of topics, in which not only the temporal, but the eternal interests of mankind, are most nearly concerned, are so far from working upon men to pursue their true such



such a way, as to deter them from what appeared wrong, and incite them to the pursuit of what was right.

AMONGST them, attention to exactness in uttering sound, produced an equal attention to exactness in marking those sounds in writing; which was done by them in the most precise, clear, and uniform manner; so that to pronounce the words properly at sight, required little more than a thorough knowledge of the letters which composed them; and to spell them properly in writing, little more was necessary than to be able to form the letters, both in natives, and foreigners who learned their tongue.

THEIR words were always spelt, as they were pronounced.

THEIR writers, being perfect masters of composition, which they were regularly taught, always suited their numbers to their subject; and arranged their words in such a way in metre, as might give the most forcible expression to their sentiments, and afford

interests, that they have it not in their power even to gain their attention.

AMONGST us, thro' the want of considering the nature and power of sounds, our written alphabet is so defective, and our manner of spelling words, so irregular, that a just pronunciation, and proper manner of spelling words, are acquired only by a few of the natives, and are almost impracticable to foreigners.

OUR's seldom.

OUR's, ignorant of all principles of composition, which they are never taught, write wholly from ear, and in much the same kind of numbers, whatever be the subject. Instead of variety and expression, melody and smoothness are chiefly attended to both in their periods and verses, by those  
the



the greatest variety of numbers, so as to please, without cloying the ear, when repeated.

THEY had music masters whose chief office it was to teach people a well measured and harmonious delivery; by which all so instructed acquired an article of the utmost importance in public life, and a most pleasing ornament in private intercourse.

THEY had dancing masters whose chief office it was to regulate all the motions of the human frame, and all the attitudes of the body, in such a way as that whether walking or standing still; speaking or listening; running or wrestling; in the rostrum or in the palæstra; the human figure should always appear graceful.

THE Greek artists had the highest advantage in having these living models thus perfectly prepared to their hands. Their painters and statuaries had nothing to do but to copy from innumer-

who are most in vogue. This produces an uniformity, which in any long work becomes insupportable to the ear, and of course wearies attention.

WE have music masters to teach the few who have good voices and talents in that way to sing, which can be of no benefit but to those who are to get their livelihood by it, and is seldom attained by others in such a degree as even to be an ornament.

WE have dancing masters whose principal employment it is to teach one poor unmanly French dance, in which so few arrive at any degree of excellence, that it is offensive to such as have any just ideas of grace, to look at them when they are performing it.

OUR artists if they draw after life, can exhibit only such figures as are to be seen in life. They must be contented with drawing unmeaning or awkward portraits. Grace and expression belonging  
able



able subjects in life the most perfect figures of grace and expression, belonging to all the nobler and more elevated emotions of the mind, to be daily seen in their orators.

THEIR artists by attending to the effects produced by the orators upon different parts of the auditory, according to their different tempers and dispositions, could see all the different degrees of expression belonging to any emotion, from its slightest, to its most forcible expression, and apply it to use in their several history pieces.

THEIR musical composers had the same advantage in borrowing from the public speakers all the finest tones belonging to the emotions and passions, which transplanted into their vocal music, and adorned by the superior charms of the singing voice, sunk deep into the heart, and produced the most powerful effects upon the mind.

to the nobler emotions are to be found only in the remains of antiquity; those that are low and mean have been admirably done from life by the inimitable Hogarth. A sad satyr on the times!

OUR artists, if they look for any such amongst the auditory, either in the senate-house or at the bar, may see abundance either of absent, or merely attentive faces; or if they are desirous of drawing a sleeping piece, they may be furnished with good patterns, from the first drowsy nod, to the profound snore, by visiting our churches.

OUR musical composers, having no archetypes of this sort, from which they may borrow the true tones, of the finer emotions and passions; or not knowing how to adapt these to words, strive only to please the fancy by novelty, variety, difficulty of execution, or noisy chorusses, and their compositions are chiefly calculated to gratify the ear.

THE



THE Greeks studied no language but their own; in consequence of which they became perfect masters of its grammar, its prosody, and the meaning of its words; in short of every part of their language, relative either to sound or sense.

WE employ the best part of our time in the study of other languages, to the utter neglect of our own. In consequence of which we scarcely know any thing of the grammar or prosody of our tongue; and the meaning of our words is very vague and indeterminate.

THIS comparison might be extended to a much greater length in many other articles, but enough has been said to serve as a clue to the curious reader, if he is inclined to follow the subject farther. And upon such an enquiry, how far soever carried, he will find that the Ancients had no advantage over us in any respect, but what arose from cultivating the language of nature, delivered by the living man; instead of the language of art, offered to the eye in the dead letter.

THE genius, capacity, and manners of a nation, can be estimated by nothing so well as the state of their language. We all allow that the understanding of a people must be limited by the number of ideas; and the number of ideas by the number of words which are in use. Where a language contains but a few words, the ideas of a people must be as few; or at least the power of communicating those ideas must be limited to the number of their symbols.

UPON the same principle, the powers of fancy, and emotions of the mind, must be circumscribed by the number of tones, looks, and gestures, in general use; as furnished by nature, or agreed upon  
by



by compact, to be their representatives. As in the one case, where there are but few words in use, there will be but few ideas; so in the other, where tones, looks and gestures are few, there will be as few feelings.

AND as the want of regularity and precision in the use of words, must occasion disorder in the exercise of the intellectual faculties; so must the same causes produce similar effects, in the exertions of fancy, and emotions of the heart.

IF this be the case, as it indisputably is, there can be no object of such importance to any nation as the improvement, and regulation of their language, since it is in vain without that to expect the improvement and regulation of the minds of the natives; as language is the great instrument, by which the human mind is shaped, and fitted for all purposes in life.

THIS opens a question, the discussion of which is of no small moment. That is, "Whether the state of language be an effect, or a cause of the state of the human mind in any country."

AMONG nations who from the beginning left their language wholly to chance, who never sought to increase their stock of ideas, but were contented with such, as necessarily forced themselves upon them, by the objects that surrounded them; and had no other feelings but what were casually excited by their natural passions; their language was thought to be complete, when they had marks for all such ideas and feelings; and the poverty of their language was so far an effect of the narrowness of their comprehension. But when it had thus reached its full growth, it ever after became a cause of the same narrowness of comprehension, in all succeeding generations, as

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in such countries, the faculties of the mind could not be exerted, beyond the limits of their language.

SUCH has been the state of most savage countries; the successive generations of which, bore an exact resemblance to those that preceded, like successive races in the animal tribes.

IN a country such as ancient Greece, where the study and improvement of language, from the motives assigned in the former Dissertation, was an object of attention in all the chief inhabitants, the minds of the people were daily gathering new stores of ideas, and consequently increasing the number of words which were to stand as their symbols. Multiplicity of words brought on a necessity of digesting them in proper classes, and reducing them to order, to prevent confusion. This opened the large field of grammar, which gave ample scope to the exercise of the understanding; and that of poetry, which under the direction of grammar, at once exercised the talents of the fancy, and afforded a rational entertainment to the mind.

WORDS being thus regulated both in point of sense and sound, by grammar and poetry, were finely prepared for the use of the public speakers. This opened to them the immense region of rhetoric and oratory, in which all the noblest faculties of man, whether of mind or body, the head or heart, the fancy or the passions, might be improved to their utmost perfection, and displayed in their utmost force.

THAT from this fountain naturally flowed the perfection of the liberal arts, has been already shewn. In Greece therefore an attention to language, was the first cause of the improvements made in the  
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the nobler faculties of the mind ; and this cause continued to operate on all rising generations, till the language became as perfect, and the faculties of the mind arrived at as great degree of excellence, as is almost possible to be attained in our mortal state, without the aid of revelation.

THERE is another case, in which language is evidently the sole cause of improving the mind ; and that is when a copious and well regulated language is brought from one country to another, and becomes the study of the principal inhabitants, in preference to their rude vernacular tongue. This was the case of the old Romans, who had their youth instructed in the Greek tongue ; and of most modern European states, amongst whom both Greek and Latin have been the chief studies of their youth, during more than two centuries. But very different was the effect produced by the introduction of the Greek amongst the old Romans, from what the study of both those languages has had amongst us ; for this plain reason, that the Greek tongue was introduced into Rome, whilst it was yet spoken by the inhabitants of Greece, in its utmost purity ; and taught by Rhetoricians from Greece, capable of instructing their pupils in all its niceties and delicacies, both with regard to sense and sound, and all the graces of action accompanying delivery.

THE consequence was, that the Romans thus enlightened, applied themselves closely to the regulation and refinement of their own tongue, so as to make it resemble as much as possible the beautiful models which they had before them : And being then a free people, greedily embraced the opportunity of introducing all the graces of delivery, as taught by the Greek Rhetoricians, into their public assemblies. And this was done with so much ardour, that in less



than half a century, they almost rivalled their great masters in beauty of language, and powers of elocution.

HERE we see an entire revolution brought about in a whole nation, merely by the introduction of the study of a new language. The Romans suddenly emerged from barbarism. From a state of ignorance with respect to every thing, but the arts of war and civil polity, their minds were of a sudden enlightened, with all the noon-day blaze of knowlege and the polite arts, which had for many centuries been gradually rising to their meridian in Greece. And probably had they preserved their liberty for two or three centuries after this æra, they would have extended their knowlege, enlarged and improved all the faculties of the human mind, to a higher pitch even than their masters had done. At least we have reason to judge so, from the rapid progress made in the sciences and arts, during a space of time not exceeding the common life of a man.

BUT this rapid progress was not made, by sitting down in their studies, and passing their time in a blind and useless admiration of the Greek writings, and the works of their artists; no, it was by doing as the Greeks did, by taking pains to enrich and polish their own language, by borrowing freely from the Grecian stores, and reducing every thing to rule and order. By instructing their children, in all the peculiar properties, and niceties of their mother tongue, and in all the arts of adorning their speech by the graces of delivery. By a generous emulation in contending for the palm, with their most famous historians, poets, orators, and artists; not by a servile imitation of their works, but by making themselves masters of the principles and rules belonging to the several sciences and arts; by laying in a fund of their own, and drawing out of their own stores.

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THE revival of the Greek and Roman languages, did not produce similar effects amongst us. They were introduced to us in their dead state, long after they had ceased to be spoken in their purity; and there were no masters to instruct us in their true pronunciation, intonation, and graces of delivery. These therefore were intirely neglected, and our whole attention was employed about the written language. Great pains were taken with regard to understanding these languages, and learning the rules of their grammar and prosody, whilst we never so much as turned our thoughts to the examination of our own. By adopting numbers of their words indeed our language was much enlarged, but these were only thrown into the rude heap, which by continual additions from those and many other languages, without regard to any rule or order, became an unwieldy mass, irregular and mishapen. Hence the learned compiler of the English Dictionary says, ‘ When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetic without rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated.’ This disorder and irregularity of the language, necessarily infected the mind, and bred confusion there. The number of our ideas was greatly increased, but the want of reducing them to order, and making them correspond exactly to their signs, produced obscurity and error. Total ignorance with regard to many points was removed; but to this succeeded abundance of false knowledge, far worse than total ignorance; and this, by means of the press, has had a brisk circulation thro’ the land. Some few indeed who took the pains to make themselves masters of the written language, improved their intellectual faculties to the height, and have given to the world admirable treatises, in philosophy, mathematics, morality, and politics; to effect which a mastery of the artificial language of ideas only was requisite, and might be performed by men born deaf; and these  
treatises



treatises are read, or at least understood only by a few. Whilst the language of nature, expressive of emotions, and declarative of the several feelings of the heart, and exertions of the fancy; a language for which there is constant use both in public assemblies, and private intercourse; a language capable of making the strongest impressions, and of being understood by all without pains or study; was almost destroyed by this attention to book-language.

THE few writers amongst us, who understood any thing of the power of sounds, and displayed their skill by a diversity of harmony in their compositions, have used their talents to little purpose, as their beauties in that respect, are lost to most readers. For as such compositions draw their whole power from being properly delivered by the living voice, their beauty can not be perceived, but when they are so delivered: and this can but seldom be the case, as not only there are no pains taken to acquire the art of delivery, (an art in which of all others most pains are requisite to attain perfection) but, as I have shewn before, there are pains taken in teaching the written language, to prevent a possibility of our arriving at excellence in the delivery of it; and to turn us from the natural expressions of the passions and fancy, to certain artificial modes utterly incompatible with those.

ELOCUTION therefore has been in a much worse state since the introduction of letters, than it could have been before, when left wholly to nature. The emotions then, however rudely, were still forcibly expressed, borrowing their power from feeling, unsophisticated by art. Of this we have instances at this day amongst the illiterate vulgar; the meanest of whom, when impassioned, delivers himself better than our most eminent orators; I do not mean in choice of words, but in the use of their concomitant signs, tones, looks,



looks, and gesture. And we are told that amongst the savages of North America, the spokesmen who come down with what is called by them a *Talk* to our governours, deliver themselves with great energy, untutored by any school-mistress but nature. But were these savages to be taught our written language by our masters, we should soon find them delivering themselves as ill as we do.

If the greatest part of our time in acquiring book language, be employed about studies which are of little or no use in society, the mind surely gets a wrong bias, in being thus turned from the active to the contemplative life, from practical duties, to vain speculations. But supposing, in our course of education, the utmost care were taken to store the mind with plenty of the most useful ideas, to give strength and vigour to the understanding, and force and perspicacity to reason; yet the work is but half performed, if at the same time, the means are not supplied of displaying these faculties to others, in their full power and beauty. A man may indeed be himself the better for these acquirements, if he applies them to useful purposes; but his neighbours can be no farther benefited by them, than in proportion as he is able to manifest them in discourse.

*Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc, sciat alter.*

Does not the neglect of this useful branch of education, tend to make men misers in knowlege, to brood in secret over their hoard of ideas, to engage in selfish pursuits, and to make wisdom degenerate into cunning? Whilst on the contrary, he who is able to display his talents in their full force and beauty, takes a delight in doing so; he receives a high gratification, from the very act of communicating his ideas and emotions, in such a way, as gives pleasure to his hearers, and procures him honour and estimation from all with whom he converses. He seeks out company for this reason, and delights in society: his social  
passions,



passions, being thus constantly exercised, become predominant, and exert themselves vigorously on all proper occasions. Whilst the silent thinker, or the bookish man, finding that he can not express himself before company, in a manner pleasing to them, or satisfactory to himself, avoids society, retires to solitude where he indulges himself in thinking, to the utter starving of all his other faculties.

AND as the understanding, tho' it be the first, is not the only part of the mind; as the fancy and the passions occupy a large portion of it; the proper exercise and regulation of these are of the utmost importance to man, not only with regard to all the most refined and constant pleasures, which our nature is capable of enjoying, but also with regard to morals. For had men the power at all times of furnishing to themselves, and others, the exquisite pleasures arising from the elegant exertions of the fancy, and from the generous and humane sensibilities of the heart; pleasures, which far from cloying, always increase by enjoyment, and which are ever attended with the delightful sense of self-approbation; men would not waste so much of their time, in brutal and sensual gratifications, which in the enjoyment are ever unsatisfactory, are reflected on with disgust, and often with remorse.

ALL the highest delights arising from the exertions of man's nobler faculties, are comprised in the single article of a just and graceful elocution: and all the powers of the fancy, all the feelings of the heart, as well as the most animated efforts of the understanding, are to be exercised so as to attain their full strength, and shaped so as to obtain their perfect beauty, by that alone: and thus strengthened and adorned, are to be manifested to others, only in that way.

MANKIND in general, charmed with the external manifestation of these powers belonging to the human mind, but which they had  
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not constant opportunities of enjoying ; grew fond of the means of reviving the ideas of the originals, and of having copies of them in their possession. Hence arose the cultivation of the imitative arts. Statues represent the figure of such speakers in the most graceful attitudes, and with strong expression of countenance. Painting does the same, but in a more enlarged sphere, as it takes in multitudes of figures, and with a greater resemblance to nature, from the force of colours. The musical composer catches the tones of the passions from the orator, and blending these with the sweet notes of his art, gives them an irresistible power over the human heart. The poet too learns from him all the tones belonging to the fancy and the passions, and by a just arrangement of his words, superadds the charms of harmony to them, when properly recited, as in musical compositions when properly sung.

IN this description of the arts, I speak of them as they were, when they might be said to be alive, and something substantial, as in old Greece ; not those phantoms which have appeared in their similitude amongst us ; those chimeras which modern invention has produced, Ixion-like, from the embraces of a cloud, instead of a Juno. And which, like clouds, are perpetually changing their shape and colour as they are wafted about by the breath of fashion.

SUCH shadowy arts leave no more impression on the mind, than successive landscapes shewn by a camera obscura. Their end being to please the fancy, they are governed by fantastical principles, which conform themselves to all the caprices of fancy. Fancy is a child, highly delighted with every play-thing at first, but soon grows tired of it, and perpetually calls out for new ones ; such has been the state of the arts amongst us. The artists have been constantly employed in finding new gewgaws for each new generation,

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and the productions which were the admiration of one century, are scarce to be endured in another. In this respect our taste for the arts exactly resembles our taste for dress. We laugh at the fantastical ornaments seen in the portraits of our forefathers, without ever reflecting that posterity will do the same with regard to ours. Fashion's magical wand makes whatever she touches appear beautiful, but whenever she removes it to a new object, all that she had touched before appear in their native deformity. Let a gentleman or lady go to court, dressed exactly in the same cloaths, and with the same ornaments, which attracted the eyes and admiration of all spectators, only a few years ago, and they would now be pointed at with contempt, and become objects of derision.

AMONGST the Ancients the arts were regulated by principles founded on reason, wherever fitness and decorum, were the objects; and upon the unerring feelings of the human heart, when the springs of the passions were to be touched. Fancy, amongst them, was only employed as an handmaid to dress and adorn the arts, not as a mistress, to form and regulate them. The consequence of which was that they were fixed and permanent. What was once esteemed beautiful, was always esteemed beautiful; and continues to be so to this day.

THE same principle governed them in their dress too. They pitched upon two kinds, one for civil, the other for military life. In these convenience and ornament were equally consulted, and the fashion was never changed.

IF the arts were established amongst us upon the same solid principles of reason and nature, as amongst the Ancients; all the evil consequences of a fluctuating and false taste, as destructive to the

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vigour of the mind, as excess of sensual gratifications, is to the strength of the body, would be avoided. And if we open the fountain of oratory, which was closed up by barbarism, the arts will once more necessarily flow from it in their natural channels.

THIS alone can put a stop to the devastations of increasing luxury, by affording an opportunity to the rich of employing the redundancy of their wealth, and superfluity of time, in procuring to themselves some of the most delightful of our mental enjoyments, instead of the corporeal, the sensual, the brutal. A just taste for the polite arts, which would of course grow up with us, were they to be seen here in perfection, would prove our sure Palladium against the assaults of vice; this the antidote against its poison; this the potent herb moli, against the charms and bewitching cup of Circe, which is to be obtained only from the God Mercury, from the God of Eloquence.

THE admirable author of *Elements of Criticism*, has in his introduction to that excellent work, finely illustrated this position. Where he says, ‘ A just taste in the fine arts, by sweetening and harmonizing the temper, is a strong antidote to the turbulence of passion, and violence of pursuit. Elegance of taste procures to a man so much enjoyment at home, or easily within reach, that in order to be occupied, he is, in youth, under no temptation to precipitate into hunting, gaming, drinking; nor, in middle age, to deliver himself over to ambition; nor, in old age, to avarice. Pride, a disgusting selfish passion, exerts itself without control, when accompanied with a bad taste. A man of this stamp, upon whom the most striking beauty makes but a faint impression, feels no joy but in gratifying his ruling passion, by the discovery of errors and blemishes. Pride, on the other hand, finds in the constitution no enemy more formidable than a delicate and discerning taste.



' taste. The man upon whom nature and culture have bestowed  
 ' this blessing, feels great delight, in the virtuous dispositions and  
 ' actions of others. He loves to cherish them, and to publish  
 ' them to the world. Faults and failings, it is true, are to him not  
 ' less obvious : but these he avoids, or removes out of sight because  
 ' they give him pain. In a word, there may be other passions,  
 ' which, for a season, disturb the peace of society more than pride :  
 ' but no other passion is so unwearied an antagonist to the sweets  
 ' of social intercourse. Pride, tending assiduously to its own grati-  
 ' fication, puts a man perpetually in opposition to others ; and dis-  
 ' poses him more to relish bad, than good qualities, even in a bosom  
 ' friend. How different that disposition of mind, where every vir-  
 ' tue in a companion or neighbour, is, by refinement of taste, set in  
 ' its strongest light ; and defects or blemishes, natural to all, are sup-  
 ' pressed, or kept out of view.

' In the next place, delicacy of taste tends not less to invigorate  
 ' the social affections, than to moderate those that are selfish. To  
 ' be convinced of this tendency, we need only reflect that delicacy  
 ' of taste, necessarily heightens our sensibility of pain and pleasure,  
 ' and of course our sympathy, which is the capital branch of every  
 ' social passion. Sympathy in particular, invites a communication  
 ' of joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. Such exercise, soothing  
 ' and satisfactory in itself, is necessarily productive of mutual good-  
 ' will and affection.'

THIS reasoning may to some appear too refined, yet nothing can be  
 more just. But these happy effects can only flow from true taste,  
 and as taste is generally conformable to the state of the liberal arts in  
 each country, wherever those arts are not established on true prin-  
 ciples, true taste will be rarely found. And I have shewn that those



arts can not be established on true principles, where the language of nature is not cultivated, and carried to perfection.

THERE has been some time since given to the world, an Estimate of the Manners of the Times, which have been referred by the author, to the principle of effeminacy. But it might as justly be asserted, that the Thames owes its plenty of water, to some scanty stream that runs into it, as that the variety of corruptions, and depraved manners of the age, were owing to a principle, whose operations are confined to so narrow a sphere. It is surprising, that the author should not recollect, the true source pointed out every where thro' the whole Christian dispensation of the chief virtues belonging to man, which is, benevolence; stiled in the scripture-phrase, charity: and consequently, its opposite, selfishness, must be the source of our worst vices. And should a new estimate be made, he would find that all the vitiated manners of the times, which he has in vain endeavoured to derive from his scanty rill, effeminacy, naturally flow from the plenteous fountain of selfishness. The virtues and vices, in all ages and countries, have had their different degrees of ascendancy, in proportion as the one or the other of these principles, had the predominance. And indeed as all human virtues and vices, depend upon the proper discharge of our duties in society, or the contrary, they can be referred to no other sources.

Now nothing can contribute more to the propagation of selfishness in this country, than the ascendancy which the written language has obtained amongst us, over that which is spoken. In order to prove this, I must beg of the reader to recollect a proposition sufficiently made out in one of my lectures, 'That the mere language of ideas, whether written or spoken, can of itself contain, no other power, but that of conveying knowledge, and improving the understanding:



standing : to touch the heart and agitate the fancy, it is requisite that the language of emotions should be joined with it.'

IN all communications by the living voice, three different effects will be produced, according as the speaker neglects to unite these two languages ; or as he unites them unskilfully and discordantly ; or as he blends them in due proportion, so as to form harmony.

IN the first case, no emotion can possibly be communicated by the speaker ; he who has no feelings in himself, nor makes use of any signs of feelings, can never work upon the sensibility of others. He may communicate knowlege, provided his hearers will be at the pains of commanding their own attention, in spite of a dull monotony, whose very nature it is, to deaden and dissipate attention.

IN the second case, where the speaker uses the language of emotions unskilfully and discordantly, he either becomes an object of disgust or ridicule to his hearers ; who accordingly, either ever after avoid him, or if they are obliged to attend, indulge themselves in a malignant satisfaction, by laughing at his absurdities.

IN the last case (rarely, very rarely seen amongst us !) where the speaker blends the two languages properly, the fancy, the passions, the understanding are all pleasingly agitated ; each individual receives an additional delight, from the sum communicated to the whole auditory, reflected from eye to eye, during a charmed attention to the orator ; poured out from breast to breast, when his silence permits them to give way to the fullness of their hearts. Perhaps there is no other situation in which the social disposition of mankind is so exquisitely gratified. They assemble at such meetings with satisfaction in their looks, from expectation of the delight which they are



are to receive ; they part with mutual congratulations, on account of mutual benefit, and entertainment. Such an intercourse, frequently repeated, tends to eradicate all selfish passions, and to bring forward and invigorate all the fine emotions of benevolence, and the great duty of Christian charity.

OF these three ways it is evident, that the first, is calculated to render us unsocial ; the second, dissocial ; and the third alone can tend to make us, what we were designed to be, social beings.

IN the last of these, thro' want of instruction, it is exceedingly difficult, to arrive at any degree of excellence, and therefore few make the attempt. Vanity, or enthusiasm, have wrought upon some to adopt the second method, on which account they are as much despised and avoided, by men of sense and taste, as they are admired and followed by fools and fanatics. But the bulk of our public speakers, hopeless of attaining the perfection necessary to the third method, and studious to avoid the ill consequences of the second, of course fall into the first ; in which by not pretending to any merit, they disarm censure ; and pass thro' life contented without honour, if they escape disgrace.

SUCH being the state of public elocution, few people can reap either profit or pleasure from it. Men therefore in general have recourse to books, both for instruction and delight. This sort of delight is in its nature a selfish one, as the exercise is performed alone, and the reader has no one to participate of his satisfaction. Nor can it ever contribute to render any one sociable, unless he reads with a view to communicate to others in discourse what knowledge he has acquired, and what emotions he has felt in reading books. Now there is no greater enemy to facility of utterance, than a habit  
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of silent reading; on which account, bookish men, make in general the poorest figure in conversation.

BUT it may be said, that tho' in the present state of public elocution, the social feelings are not exercised, and that silent reading contributes to weaken or destroy them, for want of communication, which alone can give them vigour and spirit, yet when men come to mix in the world, both in private and public companies, they will find in conversation, that this deficiency is amply made up: And that all the social feelings, all the delicate sensibilities of our nature, will be regulated, and duly exercised, by keeping good company. Indeed if the usual topics of conversation are of that nature, and if the world abounds in persons, who deliver themselves upon such topics, with feeling and taste, such an effect might reasonably be expected. But if we examine the general state of conversation amongst us, we shall find that it is rather calculated, like that of public elocution, to render us unsocial, or dissocial, than social beings.

THE bulk of mankind may be divided into four classes. The first and most numerous consists of the Insipids; who having little knowledge, little feeling, and less power of communicating them, are sure they can make no figure in conversation; and in order to conceal their deficiency, hide themselves in perpetual crowds. These always wear the same countenance, have but one set of phrases, which they adapt to all topics, and speak in the *bon ton*, which is without any change of tone. They would not for the world discover any emotion, either in look, gesture, or voice; and by a constant habit of suppressing their signs, they at last overcome the emotions themselves. Thus are they rendered unsocial, by society. Amongst this class



class is to be found what is commonly called, *the best company*, allowed to be the most selfish members of the community.

THE second class may be called the Disputants; who having collected from books a heap of undigested knowledge, and a very awkward and inaccurate manner of setting it forth in discourse, are engaged in endless controversies and wrangles, maintained with great warmth and violence, to the no small rousing and invigorating of all the worst passions of man, pride, envy, hatred, &c. and thus are these men rendered dissocial by society, and may justly be called bad company.

THE third class, is of the Smarts, and the Wits; who have only such a smattering of knowledge, as to look down with contempt on the Insipids, and to make sport of the Disputants. Their favourite enjoyment is a perpetual ridicule of all that is serious and good; they attempt to laugh others, and really themselves, out of all social feelings; and seem to think risibility, the true characteristic of man. These are dreaded and avoided by the Insipids; called bad company by the Disputants; and reckoned *mighty good company* by fools, and themselves.

THE fourth class consists of those who give themselves up to sensuality, voluptuousness, and profligacy of all sorts; who constantly acting against the principles upon which the noblest purposes of society are founded, may be justly termed Antisocialists, and called the worst company in the world.

It is to be wished that the number of those, whose conversation can at once enlighten the understanding, delight the fancy, and make the heart distend with benevolent sensations, by means of a happy union of the two languages of art and nature, were so great,



as to form a fifth class; but rarely are such men to be found; and more rarely have they an opportunity of exerting their talents, in the dissonance of mixed company, not tuned to their pitch. Happy the man, who can find such a one to be the chosen companion of his private hours! or who can now and then pick out a select set, to participate of the satisfaction, which such a one is capable of diffusing, thro' persons of nice sensibility, and just taste.

It can not be denied that the improvement of conversation, would greatly contribute to improve our manners, and to make us take delight in society. The way to improve conversation, is to make that a chief object of attention, in the education of our youth, by instructing them in all the points essential to it, instead of leaving it, as we do now, to chance. To attend to their delivery from their first efforts to articulate, to the utmost perfection of a refined elocution. To make them study the precise meaning, of all the words and phrases in their native tongue. By constant practice both in reciting the best works, and their own extemporaneous comments upon them, to give them a facility, and elegance of expression. All this will be done of course, if we will make the living language, as it ought to be, our first object of attention; and consider the written one, as it should be, only in a secondary light. This would be the most effectual way to check the force of that sordid principle, selfishness, the nourisher of every vice; and to give vigour to that noble one of benevolence, the source of every Christian virtue.

UPON the whole, if what I have advanced upon this subject be well founded, it will follow, that the people of those countries, where the greatest pains were taken to refine and cultivate their speech, and where the study and practice of oratory were most general, approached the nearest to the perfection of human nature. But  
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does history warrant the truth of this? Let us try. What nations were they who applied themselves to those studies, and to the exercise of that art? We know but of two; the Greeks and Romans. Do not their very names flash conviction on us? Need there be more said to prove the point? Are not these the nations allowed by the universal voice of mankind, to have excelled all others, and to have brought human nature to a degree of perfection, that none before them ever reached; none since have arrived at, even with the assistance of their admirable precepts, and bright patterns, together with many glorious advantages and lights which they wanted? Were not these the only nations who were masters of the oratorical art? Will not this satisfy us? do we want farther proof, that it was to that art they were indebted, for their pre-eminence over the rest of the world? Let us examine at what period of time it was, that the Greeks shone forth in all that blaze of glory: we shall find, it was, when oratory reached its meridian. Amongst what particular people of Greece, did the grand constellation of human excellencies arise, whose number and lustre have not been equalled since sun and moon were made? Amongst the Athenians, where oratory reached its highest pitch. When did the æra of the Roman glory commence? not 'till after the art of oratory had been cultivated. When was it that her cluster of extraordinary geniuses adorned her hemisphere? not 'till after oratory had reached its meridian. In both nations when did this splendour vanish? When the sun of oratory was set.

Is there any doubt yet remaining? will not the reason and nature of things, corroborated by the strongest facts, overthrow prejudice? Shall we not believe in the amazing powers of eloquence, the accounts of which are so strongly authenticated, unless she should present herself to our senses, in all the charms wherewith she was once adorned, and thro' them force conviction on our minds? It is to be



feared a proof of this kind, is not to be expected by us, in our present state; much time, much labour, did it cost the Ancients, before they brought that art to perfection; much time, much labour must it cost the Moderns, before they can rival them in that point. Yet surely from circumstances, and the nature of things, we may form a just idea of the charms and power of oratory, without having them exemplified in a living instance. Imagine to yourselves a Demosthenes addressing the most illustrious assembly in the world, upon a point whereon the fate of the most illustrious of nations depended. How awful such a meeting! how vast the subject! Is man possessed of talents adequate to the great occasion? Adequate! yes, superior. By the power of his eloquence, the augustness of the assembly is lost, in the dignity of the orator; and the importance of the subject, for a while suspended, by the admiration of his talents. With what strength of argument, with what power of fancy, with what emotions of the heart, does he assault and subjugate the whole man, and at once captivate his reason, his imagination, and his passions. To effect this must be the utmost effort, of the most improved state of human nature. Not a faculty that he possesses, is here unemployed; not a faculty that he possesses, but is here exerted to its highest pitch. All his internal powers are at work; all his external testify their energies. Within, the memory, the fancy, the judgment, the passions are all busy; without, every muscle, every nerve is exerted; not a feature, not a limb, but speaks. The organs of the body, attuned to the energies of the mind, thro' the kindred organs of the hearers, instantaneously, and as it were with an electrical spirit, vibrate those energies from soul to soul! Notwithstanding the diversity of minds in such a multitude, by the lightening of eloquence, they are melted into one mass; the whole assembly actuated in one and the same way, become as it were one man, have but one voice.

HERE



HERE only it is that the admirable mechanism of the human frame, so far as it regards an union with an intellectual mind, and so far as it is fitted to display the hidden powers of the intellect to view, can be perceived: here and here only it is that the perfection of human nature arising from such an union of soul and body, can be manifested. In these exertions, the divine part of us, becomes as it were an object of the senses; it is to be seen, to be heard; it lightened in the eye of a Pericles, it thundered from his voice. If any one doubts of the truth of this position, let him consider whether there is any other situation of life, any other profession or art, in which it is possible for man, at once to display, all the force, of all his faculties, both of body and mind? If there be not, the point must be granted. Compare Xerxes on his throne; Philip in the battle of Chæronea; Archimedes in his closet; or Virgil in his study; with Demosthenes, rousing the Greeks to the preservation of their liberties;—How do the king, the general, the philosopher, and the poet, sink below the orator!

WHAT a magnificent idea, and yet how strictly just, has the enthusiastic spirit of Milton presented us, of the power of the ancient orators, in the few following admirable lines; when speaking of those of Athens he says,

Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence  
Wielded at will that fierce Democratic;  
Shook the arsenal; and fulmin'd over Greece,  
To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne.

Tho' the force of eloquence, even in these times, can not be denied, from its manifest effects, wherever it breaks forth by means of an uncommon genius, and extraordinary application, yet the Moderns say, that they can not give credit to the wonders told of it in ancient times,



times, with regard to the superlative delight attending it, which allured such numbers to the study of the art, and attracted such multitudes to hear those who were masters of it. They will not easily believe, from their view of it in its present uncultivated state, that it could sum up in itself, all the pleasures which resulted from the most refined arts, and rival each of them in those qualities which seemed peculiar to each. They can not conceive that it should be as charming to the ear as the most melodious song; that it should warm the imagination as much as the most animated poem; or rouse the passions to an equal degree with the glowing scenes of a well acted tragedy. And yet this was allowed universally to be the case both at Athens and Rome. It is thus that Cicero speaks of this noble art. ‘*Nam ut usum dicendi omittam, qui in omni pacata et libera civitate dominatur, tanta oblectatio est in ipsa facultate dicendi, ut nihil hominum aut auribus, aut mentibus, jucundius percipi possit. Qui enim cantus, moderatæ orationis pronuntiatione, dulcior inveniri potest? Quod carmen, artificiosa verborum conclusione, aptius? Quis actor, in imitanda, quam orator, in suscipienda veritate jucundior?*’

IF from our own experience we are flow of belief with regard to these articles, let us reflect, what incompetent judges we must be, of an art which we have utterly neglected, and which of all others, requires most pains to bring it to perfection. Let us not pretend to decide against the authority of undoubted judges, with regard to the magic charms of elocution, in countries where nothing appertaining to it was left to chance. The structure of their words, their position in sentences, all the tones of the passions, and fancy, those belonging to the several stops and pauses; were settled amongst them according to a musical scale, and delivered in proportions equally exact; and to these, all the accompaniments of gesture, correspond-  
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ed in just time. The candid and judicious amongst us, will readily form an estimate, of the degree of pleasure which must have been communicated, by speech so harmonized; when they reflect on the delight, which even in our irregular state, they receive from hearing any discourse delivered in a better manner than ordinary, by persons whose natural talents in that way give them a comparative excellence. How much more exquisite must it have been, when all the most charming delicacies of art, were superadded to the strongest powers of nature?

THE question now to be decided is, whether there be any insurmountable obstacle in our way, which, were we to apply ourselves to the cultivation of that art, would prevent our making so great a progress in it, or carrying it to such a pitch of perfection, as the Ancients did. With regard to the organs of speech and hearing, there can be no doubt that ours are exactly constructed in the same manner, and come from the hand of nature in an equal degree of perfection. This is sufficiently proved by the delicacy of ear, and harmony of voice, to be found in many who apply themselves to the knowledge and practice of vocal music. The only article then, in which we can possibly differ, must be that of language. Much indeed depends upon the state of that important article. Language is to knowledge, what body is to soul; much therefore must indeed depend upon its structure. The body is admirably contrived to answer all the purposes of the soul in this world; it is the work of an omniscient maker, and therefore perfect. But language, the body of thought, is in a great measure the workmanship of man, and therefore imperfect. Yet amazing has been the difference in the artful mechanism, and beautiful form of these bodies of thought, in different nations, according to the different degrees of genius, skill, and application, in those who formed and polished them. If a national



tional language be in itself poor, barbarous, or discordant, all attempts towards harmonious composition, or refined speaking in such a tongue, must prove fruitless. Demosthenes could never have made such orations, or produced such effects from them, had his native language been High Dutch. Music can never make any great progress in a country where no instrument is known but the bagpipe; nor elocution where the tongue is barbarous. Language, being the great instrument of elocution, if it be not of a good found and large compass, will never suffer that art to give much delight, nor consequently to make any great progress. But tho' a nation should be in possession of an instrument, in its construction perfectly fitted to shew all the force of harmony; if they never enquire into its powers, nor try what compass it has; if they take no pains to put it in tune; if they learn not the rules of music, nor are acquainted with the notes; they will not be in a much better situation than those who are confined to the poorest. Some indeed may learn a few tunes by ear, but the generality will produce nothing but discord, like those who touch the keys of an harpsicord at random.

THAT such is our case, that we are in possession of a language in its own nature capable of the utmost expression and harmony, and that with proper pains and culture, it might rival or even excel the noble languages of Greece and Rome, I hope to be able in the next course of lectures, to prove in some respects, and to make it highly probable in others.



HEADS OF A PLAN

FOR THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF

ELOCUTION;

AND FOR

PROMOTING THE STUDY

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE;

IN ORDER TO THE

REFINING, ASCERTAINING,

And Reducing it to a STANDARD:

TOGETHER WITH

Some ARGUMENTS, to enforce the NECESSITY of

carrying such a PLAN into Execution.

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HEADS OF A PLAN

FOR THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

PROMOTING THE STUDY

OF THE

REPEATING A CERTAIN

And Reducing it to a STANDARD

TOGETHER WITH

SOME ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE SAME

BY J. H. B. B. B.



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# HEADS of a PLAN

## FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF

# ELOCUTION, &c.

SINCE the time that Mr. SHERIDAN delivered his first Course of Lectures, he has been repeatedly solicited by many persons of the most distinguished abilities, to draw up a regular plan, for the introduction and establishment of the Art of Elocution, and the grammatical study of the English language, as points which would contribute much to the improvement of education, and consequently to the benefit of these realms.

BUT he owns, whatever inclination he may have to obey their commands, the undertaking appears to him to be too arduous, and far beyond his strength. To digest so important a plan would require much time and thought, as well as much greater talents than he can boast. Or could vanity even suggest to him that he is equal to the point, there are many weighty reasons for his declining it. An attempt to settle an affair of such national concern would, in any private person, be too invidious a task, and might expose him to



much censure. A plan of that sort should be the joint product of some of the ablest heads, whose characters might give such an authority, and whose power might give such a sanction to what they proposed, as to abash prejudice, silence envy, and disarm ridicule.

BUT that he may shew his readiness to obey the commands of such respectable personages, as far as lies in his power, he will endeavour to throw together some loose thoughts on the subject, in order that they may undergo the examination of men of judgement and experience, and that a regular plan may be drawn up under the direction of such men of genius and abilities, as shall be inclined to give their assistance on this occasion.

IT has been a point disputed in what place these studies ought to commence; though most are agreed, that they can not be too early inculcated, and that children ought to be trained in them from the very first rudiments, when the plant organs are easily formed to the pronounciation of any sounds; and before prejudice, or evil habits shall have taken root.

IT is certain, that the principles of elocution, and the rules of English Grammar cannot be too soon instilled. But this can be effected only by a sufficient number of skilful masters, and a well-digested system of rules, neither of which are at present ready to our hands.

THE first necessary step, therefore, will be to find out a method whereby a sufficient number of skilful masters may be procured to teach English, and the art of speaking, by one uniform system of well-digested rules.



THE most speedy and effectual way to accomplish this point will be the establishment of these studies at the two Universities; as in those will be found collected all such as are hereafter to be masters of schools, who by learning the English grammar themselves, and the art of speaking, by one uniform system of rules, will of course afterwards be enabled to teach them in the same way throughout the kingdom.

WHEN a grammatical knowledge of our mother tongue, and a critical skill therein, together with the art of reading it with propriety, and reciting it publickly with judgement and grace, shall become part of a collegiate course, and confer honour and reputation on such young gentlemen as may distinguish themselves in that way, it must also become an object of serious attention to all Schoolmasters, that their pupils may not go to the Universities unprepared in such material articles.

SUCH masters therefore as are at present too old to learn, or to alter their own confirmed habits; or such as have not talents to instruct their scholars in the art of elocution, or to afford in themselves patterns for imitation, will be obliged to take ushers from the Universities, as soon as they can be procured, who may be properly qualified to give instruction in those branches. And parents, when they come to see the great use and necessity of these additional studies; will not demur against paying an additional price to the masters, in order to enable them to make it worth the while of such ushers, to take the extraordinary pains, which an institution of this nature will require.

OR in schools where the ushers are fixed and properly qualified to teach what is now their chief province, the dead languages only, as



it might be thought an act of cruelty to remove them on account of their deficiency in these new points, in this case masters of English may be allowed to teach the boys privately at their leisure hours; and in a short time there will be few parents who will not think the gratuity to them better bestowed, than to the masters of French, dancing, or fencing. Nor should the master of English, and the art of speaking, be rated lower than any of those, in point of salary, and the stipend which he will receive in that case, will afford an income sufficient to induce men liberally educated, to make it their profession.

WHEN these studies are once established in the Universities, and afterwards in the Grammar schools, it will then become necessary for those who profess to teach English, and prepare boys for the Latin School, to alter their method, and to go regularly to work; not only by teaching them their native tongue grammatically, but also by grounding them well in the rudiments of elocution, in a just manner of reading aloud, and a well modulated delivery; nor will any parents, I presume, ever suffer their children to be vitiated in the first principles of elocution, by the most ignorant of men, when skilful masters are to be procured.

THUS by beginning at the University, we begin as it were at the source, the vital seat of motion, which like the heart impels the life-blood to the extremities of the frame, and by a due circulation receives it again to enable it to continue its functions.

BUT there is another still more cogent reason for establishing these studies first at the University, which is, that the present rising race there may reap the benefit of instruction, and not be suffered, like their predecessors, to pass into life, and to enter upon business utterly ignorant of those points, where the opportunities of redeem-  
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ing lost time may not easily offer. It will be said, that it would have been better if these studies had commenced earlier in life, and that it will be difficult to root out confirmed bad habits of pronunciation, and delivery. There is no contradicting this truth; the earlier boys are taken in hand, the better; but because the best can not be done, is, therefore, nothing to be done? It is true, it will require more pains, both in the instructor and the pupil, to subdue bad habits; but if they are to be subdued, is it not better to take those pains, than to suffer those bad habits to continue through life? There would be few instances found of persons at that time of life who might not be cured of gross faults, and errors; and with regard to such as have talents for elocution, though they may not arrive at the precise degree of excellence, which might have been expected had they been trained regularly from the beginning, yet can such difference be a matter of but little moment, as it can never be perceived by the world: for the advantage which even this late study and practice will give them over their predecessors, who never took any pains, will make their comparative excellence, in the eyes of mankind, seem as absolute.

SUPPOSING, therefore, that on these accounts the University should be allowed to be the proper place where such an establishment should be founded, the next point to be considered is how it is to be supported, and by what means a fund may be raised for the purpose.

WHEN we look into the history of most endowments, we shall find that they were chiefly bequests of particular men, in the days when it was the fashion to think, that legacies left to charitable and public uses, were a sure means of saving the soul. Of late, as that opinion has lost ground, there have been fewer instances of benefactions



benefactions in that way; and as it has been thought, that every thing necessary to education, has been long since provided for in the Universities, new endowments there have been deemed superfluous.

WE have indeed lately an instance of a new one, and of a most useful kind, in Mr. Viner's benefaction, for the support of lectures in the common law.

THERE is also another shortly to take place, arising from the Clarendon Benefaction, for introducing the bodily exercises of riding the great horse, fencing, &c. as taught in foreign Academies.

THE late Sir James Lowther, as I was informed by the learned head of Peter-House at Cambridge, had left in one of his wills, a considerable legacy to the University of Oxford, for the endowment of lectureships on the English language, and the art of elocution, though it was omitted in his last testament, for what reason is not known.

BUT as a reliance on endowments from particular men is at best precarious, and may never take place, some more certain and speedy method of establishing these studies ought to be found.

NOR shall we have far to seek for such a method, as we need only fall in with a new mode introduced into this country of promoting public good, by the institution of societies for encouraging such arts, sciences, manufactures, and studies as are most wanting.

THIS practice, which was first begun in Ireland, was soon adopted by the sharp-sighted people of Scotland, in both which kingdoms most excellent effects have been produced from it; and though it is

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in a manner in its infancy here, yet some good has already proceeded from it, and much more may reasonably be expected.

THIS practice seems of all others to be best suited to the constitution and genius of the people of this country.

OUR limited monarchs have it not in their power, were it ever so much in their inclination, to diffuse blessings through the nation, in the same manner as in other countries, where the will of the sovereign is the law.

FROM the nature of our complicated government, the best ministry will find sufficient employment to preserve the constitution, to keep things from growing worse, and to save the state from destruction, without entering into long details of schemes that may contribute to the flourishing condition of the community. Besides, power changes hands so quickly, and a minister is often so short-lived, that his chief attention must be taken up about what is necessary to be done, rather than about what is useful; and as the duration of his authority is so precarious, he can have but little encouragement to pursue any plan which may require not only much pains, but length of time to bring it to maturity.

LITTLE is now to be hoped from public encouragement in this country, because the public is poor, loaded with debt, and put to difficulties to support itself; but much ought to be expected from private encouragement to all new and useful undertakings, because individuals are rich, and can with ease spare something to their support: And surely nothing can be more equitable than that where numbers are to be benefited by any plan, numbers should contribute to the execution and support of it.



UPON examination it would probably appear, that there could be no plan offered to the public, in the success of which, so many British subjects are so nearly and deeply interested, as the one now treated of for the improvement of elocution, and for promoting the study of the English language; and consequently there can be none so likely to induce numbers to form themselves into a society for that purpose.

SUPPOSING therefore such a society were established, consisting of a sufficient number of men of rank, fortune, and abilities, determined to give all due assistance to the undertaking; the next article to be considered is, in what way they should proceed, and what method they should pursue towards accomplishing the ends for which they were associated.

THIS is a matter which cannot be adjusted but by themselves, and must be the result of their deliberations at their several meetings: and indeed it would be highly presumptuous in any one to dictate to such a body, or to attempt to point out the exact path in which they are to walk.

YET it may not be amiss to offer a few hints upon this head, if they should only serve to furnish matter for others to work upon, and mould into a better form.

IF the society should be of opinion for the reasons before mentioned, that these studies should take their rise at the University, the first necessary step will be to use the speediest means of procuring a sufficient number of persons, properly qualified for the office of instructors.



As it is probable from the general neglect of these points, that there would be few, if any found at this day, fit to undertake such a charge, sufficient encouragement should be given to young men possessed of talents in that way, to apply themselves closely to the study and practice of those articles, in order to qualify themselves for the office of preceptors.

FOR this purpose certain annual salaries, for such a term of years as shall be thought proper, should be given to such men as shall be deemed qualified for the employment, by the society, or by such judges as they shall appoint to examine into their respective merits.

A CERTAIN income would be a strong inducement to many young men of talents, whose prospects in life may not be considerable, to strike into that course; though they would not venture to quit the beaten path upon precarious prospects only, or the chance of what gratuity they might receive from pupils. Yet it may not be found necessary in the event, that these salaries should be perpetual, but only for a certain term of years, as before mentioned, 'till these studies shall have gained a solid establishment, and become general; for in that case instructors will obtain a sufficient income from their pupils, as other masters do; and the whole, or part of those salaries, at the pleasure of the society, may revert to the fund for other purposes.

WHEN the Universities shall have been supplied with a sufficient number of instructors in this way, the next object will be to spread these studies as speedily as possible thro' the realm, by planting able masters in the several counties, and principal towns of Great Britain; who should in like manner have fixed and stated salaries



for a certain term, which may arise partly from the fund belonging to the society, and partly from the contributions of the principal inhabitants belonging to those counties and great towns. It is to be supposed that few parents will hesitate to throw in their mite on this occasion, in order to have their children taught just pronunciation, and purity of phrase in discourse; and that they may avoid provincial dialects, accents, and phraseology, which prevail more or less thro' all the counties of Great Britain; and which, thro' want of proper care in early years, are necessarily caught, in some degree, by all who are trained in those counties, and generally stick to them during the remainder of their lives.

NOR would it be in the least irrational to expect, that as the utility of this measure would be daily more and more perceived from its fruits, there should arise several smaller societies in the different counties of the kingdom, to correspond and co-operate with the great society in the capital, in order to promote so useful an institution, and render it as universal as possible.

WHEN the first essential point is provided for, that of giving sufficient encouragement to masters, the next care should be to stimulate pupils also to apply themselves closely to these studies, by conferring suitable rewards on such as should distinguish themselves by public exhibitions of their superiority in those articles. For this purpose there might be stated days appointed, four times a year, or once in each term at the Universities, when all such as were inclined to enter the lists might have an opportunity of delivering an English speech in the theatre or senate-house; and such as were most approved of should be intitled to rewards in proportion to their several degrees of merit. These rewards might be either gold medals, or such external ornaments as should be deemed most proper by the ruling



ruling part of the University : to be adjudged by the Vice Chancellor, heads of houses, and such others as they might think fit to associate with them.

MANY other methods of encouragement will, no doubt, be suggested to the society in the course of their enquiries ; these are only hinted at, as seeming to be the most material during the infancy of the design.

PREMIUMS also may be distributed quarterly at the schools, on stated days, in the same manner as at the Universities. The neglect of rewards, and the reliance on punishments alone, in a course of education which is to fit boys to become useful members of a free state, has been a fatal oversight. Punishments may restrain from evil ; reward alone can excite to good. Fear may debase, but never can ennoble the mind. The best effect to be hoped from that principle is mediocrity ; but it is from emulation alone that excellence is to be expected. It is that generous principle only which is possessed of sufficient energy to rouse and stimulate the young ingenuous minds, to put forth all their strength, and exert every faculty to outstrip their equals in the tough race of honour.

To point out distinctly the many excellent consequences which might flow from the establishment of such a society, would require a volume ; but surely there is no one who has the least degree of public spirit, or a due regard to his own interest, that would not solicit to be a member of it, and promote the end of their institution, if he were convinced that the following good effects might reasonably be expected from their endeavours.

I. THE establishment of an uniformity of pronunciation throughout all his Majesty's British dominions.

II. THE



II. THE facilitating the acquirement of a just, proper delivery, to such as shall apply to it; and the enabling all such as are to speak in public, to deliver their sentiments with due grace and force, in proportion to their talents for elocution.

LASTLY, The refining, ascertaining, and establishing the English language on a durable basis.

Now I shall endeavour, in as concise a manner as I can, to shew how these three desirable points may be accomplished by the attention, care, and encouragement of such a society as is proposed.

As to the first article, it can not be denied that an uniformity of pronunciation throughout Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, as well as through the several counties of England, would be a point much to be wished; as it might in a great measure contribute to destroy those odious distinctions between subjects of the same king, and members of the same community, which are ever attended with ill consequences, and which are chiefly kept alive by difference of pronunciation, and dialects; for these in a manner proclaim the place of a man's birth, whenever he speaks, which otherwise could not be known by any other marks in mixed societies.

THIS may be thought an impracticable point, as never having been accomplished either in ancient or modern times, even amongst nations who have taken most pains to ascertain their speech, and to cultivate the art of delivery.

IT will be said that amongst the Ancients, uniformity and purity of pronunciation, were to be found only within the walls of Athens and Rome, but extended not to the colonies; and that amongst the  
Moderns,



Moderns, they are confined to a few cities of France and Italy, notwithstanding the vast pains taken with their several languages, and the ease with which instruction may be had in their true pronunciation.

BUT England has some advantages over other nations, both ancient and modern, which would insure us success if the attempt were once made, and vigorous measures taken to support it. There are two articles which have given us great advantage over the Ancients with regard to the point we are speaking of; I mean the Press, and the Service of the Church. By means of these, an uniformity of pronunciation might with ease be diffused through the whole land. For want of the art of printing, the ancient Greeks and Romans could not propagate their languages far by means of books; for as manuscripts were dear, few could afford to purchase them, and therefore few learned to read. Knowledge to the bulk of the people was conveyed through the ear, and this of course made them more attentive to the sound and pronunciation of words. As both at Athens and Rome the number of orators, public speakers, and philosophers who taught *viva voce* without the assistance of books was very great; and as these were all regularly trained to pronounce their native language exactly in the same manner, a public general standard of pronunciation was fixed, and open to all the inhabitants of Athens and Rome; and the people who were trained, and lived in those cities, acquired from the prevalence of good example the right and just manner of pronouncing their words; in the same way as people amongst us, of different shires and counties, naturally contract a bad one, from the prevalence of bad example. But at a distance from the capital, and in the several colonies, as there was little or no public speaking, so was there no standard to be referred to, no motive for taking pains to preserve exactness and purity of pronunciation,



pronunciation, and consequently it was left wholly to chance and caprice, as amongst us.

BUT as by means of the press all ranks of people are taught to read, throughout the most distant parts of these countries, nothing can be more clear, than that if the masters who teach English were qualified for the office, if they were themselves instructed by one uniform system of rules, and agreed exactly in the same manner of pronouncing their native tongue, they might in a great measure spread that pronunciation universally through the kingdom. And when the youth shall have been thus prepared, and trained in the right way, in order to preserve them in it, we might have a standard of so general and public a nature, in the pulpit, and such patterns and models for imitation might be afforded in our clergy, as no other nation could boast. It is plain that both the standard and influence of example from public speakers amongst the Ancients were confined to the capital, which would not be the case amongst us, if the standard of speech was affixed to the pulpit. Nor could any of the more polished modern nations vie with us in that point; as none of them have like us a settled regular Divine Service, and the Bible read constantly in the vulgar tongue in places of public worship.

As it must be allowed that a standard of pronunciation ought to be fixed somewhere, so common sense will tell us that it ought to be fixed there where it is likely to be most constant, permanent, and universal. Now it is evident, that in all these articles no place can be put in competition with the church: In point of constancy, there is a settled service daily or weekly performed there; in point of permanence, this service is likely to last as long as our constitution; and in point of universality, it is spread throughout his majesty's British dominions. How confined, with respect to that, must any standard  
be



be which should be fixed to the court, the senate-house, or the bar; and how few of his majesty's subjects, in comparison, would have an opportunity of referring to it in any of those places, or of being benefited by it?

INDEED were the clergy but uniform in their pronunciation, they must necessarily become the standard: For besides that no other order of men could have any right to dispute their claim to it, as it must be allowed, that purity and propriety of delivery ought in a more especial manner to be sought after, by such as are employed in the sacred office, no other rank of men could have such opportunities of supporting their claim, and carrying it into effect by the general influence of their example. To hear them, is not only in the power of all classes of men, but is also part of their duty. And were the clergy but masters of the powers of elocution, it would likewise be the inclination of all classes of men to hear them; and then all men would through choice make them their patterns.

UNIFORMITY and exactness of pronunciation in that order, would certainly have the same effects that were produced by the public speakers of Athens and Rome, and diffuse them generally through the people; especially if at the same time we make use of the advantage which the press has given us, by having all children taught well, instead of being ill taught to read. In that case such constant patterns as they would have before them, would prevent their relapsing into faults, committed by people more advanced in life, who had not the good fortune to reap the benefit of such instruction in their youth, and who might not easily change bad habits, which had been contracted in their early years.

THIS uniformity in all the rising generation of the clergy will of course be obtained, if these studies should be immediately established



at the Universities; and with respect to the present race of the younger clergy (or such others as shall not think themselves too old to learn) they may easily be brought to read the settled service uniformly, as a month's application, under proper instructors, would be found sufficient for that purpose.

AN uniformity amongst those who regularly apply to the acquisition of this important branch of their office, will soon bring a necessity on the rest to apply also; as otherwise they will be disgraced by the comparison, and it will be scandalous to be any longer deficient in so obvious a point, when they shall have the means in their power of being set right. At present indeed when there is no standard, no uniformity, no instruction; every one without fear or disgrace perseveres in the manner which chance and bad habit have given him. He knows not how to help it. He is not ashamed  
—*Defendit numerus.*

WITH regard to the second article, that of rendering the acquirement of a just, forcible, and graceful delivery easy to such as shall apply to it, &c. though it be generally allowed to be a most desirable object, yet few think it a point that can be compassed. Many will not allow that elocution either is, or can be taught as an art. That it was so, and the most favourite art amongst the Greeks and Romans, can not be denied. What *has* been, *may* be. But to those who say that because it never has been taught or practised as such amongst us, therefore it never can be, I shall not attempt an answer.

I SHALL only ask those gentlemen whether pains and labour will not be the best means of acquiring skill; and whether skill and practice will not afford the best means of correcting errors, supplying defects, and improving good natural talents in speaking, as they do  
in



in every thing else? The attempt is worth making, it may be productive of much good, it can not do harm. If we try we may accomplish the point; if we sit still, things must remain in the same state.

WITH regard to the third and last article, the refining, ascertaining, and establishing our language on a durable basis, it is very clear that this must be the work of care and pains, and not of chance. And that the only means by which these desirable ends can be attained in such a constitution as ours, must be the introducing the regular study of it, and making it a necessary part of education, has been amply proved in the second book of an essay intitled *British Education*; the author of which is the more emboldened to make this assertion, as his arguments on that head have been examined, and allowed to be conclusive, by men remarkable for penetration and solidity.

No one will say but that it is a thing much to be wished that an accurate knowledge of English, with regard to the precise meaning of words, were more easily attainable, and more generally diffused through the natives of this country; as also a greater command of them so as to give a facility in the choice, and a correct fluency of speech. The first of these articles can be attained only by regular study, and the last by constant practice.

THAT it is by regular study only that we acquire knowledge of the dead languages, and chiefly also of foreign tongues, must be allowed; and there are few of tolerable capacity, who with due application, and the assistance of proper rules and masters, do not arrive at even a critical skill in those. But how few are there in this country, who can boast the same with respect to their own language. If



it be asserted on one side, that there is no occasion for taking such pains with regard to a mother tongue, as the knowlege of that will come of course; it may be affirmed on the other with greater justice, that there is much more occasion to apply closely to the study of that, than of any other; not only as it is a matter of much more importance to us than all the other languages in the world, but because there are many errors, prejudices, and bad habits to be overcome in that, which is not the case in the others. For though the use of words will come of course, yet the right use of them will not; unless we allow that they have always the same precise meaning annexed to them, both by the people with whom we converse, and by the writers whose works we read. Now nothing is more notorious than that most disputes and controversies which are carried on both in writing and speaking, without ever coming to a conclusion, do not arise so much from any thing as a disagreement in the meaning of words, and would for the most part speedily be put an end to, were the disputants only obliged to define their terms. For it must be obvious enough that two men who use the same words with any difference of meaning, can never agree in a conclusion. Thus the neglect of studying our language would probably be found to be the chief source of error both in opinion and conduct. As our knowlege of most things must depend upon our rightly understanding the words which are their types, any misconception of them must occasion an error in ideas, and that of course an error in conduct. For as our notions and opinions are formed upon words, and as our actions are governed by our notions and opinions, men's conduct in life must depend more upon skill in language, than is generally imagined. Thus the study of the native tongue is a matter of more importance to society, even with regard to morals, than will at first view be conceived.

• SHOULD



\* SHOULD \* it be the case in any country that an infinite number of books were read there, and very little knowlege obtained; that there should be much speaking and little understanding; that disputes upon all manner of topics should be carried on without ever coming to an end, it would not follow that the intellectual faculties of such a people were inferiour to others, as the whole might easily be solved by considering the state of their language. So far as that is obscure or ill understood, so far must the knowlege acquired in it be confused or erroneous. And when it is considered what little care is taken amongst us to come at an accurate knowlege of a language, the most copious, and on many other accounts the most difficult to be understood, of any in the known world, there is no occasion to wonder that we should be the most unsettled in our notions, and the most divided in our opinions of any people, since the time of the separation of philosophy from the study of rhetoric, amongst the Greeks. It is well known that the destruction of all useful knowlege soon followed that separation amongst them, nor can the restoration of it amongst us, be obtained by any other means but by their re-union.'

THIS observation reminds me of the second article before-mentioned, I mean a facility in chusing words, and a correct fluency of speech. And these I have asserted can be acquired only by practice, and habit.

As habit renders most things easy, even such as are in their nature exceedingly difficult, so does it remarkably promote a facility of delivering our sentiments. Of the truth of this we have a convincing proof in the gentlemen of the bar; who being under a necessity of speaking their extemporaneous thoughts, though at first they do



it with great awkwardness, through the want of having been trained to this necessary branch of their profession, yet in time, by perseverance and practice, are enabled to speak in any cause with the utmost ease and readiness. Whilst on the contrary, they who are in holy orders, and rely on the assistance of their written discourses, could not deliver three sentences upon points of which they are the most perfect masters, if their sermons were not before them. Nay few of them would even be able to proceed in the usual service of the prayers, deeply impressed as it must be on their memories by continual repetition, if the Prayer-Book were not open before them. Such is the power of habit!

No observation is more common than that bookish men are remarkable for taciturnity. Nor is this silence to be considered as a mark of wisdom, or the effect of thinking; for in reality such men find it difficult, through want of practice, to express their thoughts with freedom, and therefore avoid speaking, as painful. Yet many of them can write their sentiments with ease, because they have accustomed themselves to writing. Whilst on the other hand a superficial man of the world, by being habituated to conversation, shall be always ready to express his thoughts with volubility and ease, though infinitely inferior to the studious man both in knowledge of things and words; as would be sufficiently apparent were he to sit down and commit his thoughts to paper. Nay this very man who has such ease, readiness, and fluency of expression in company, were he called upon to deliver his thoughts in a public assembly, would stammer, hesitate, and be as incapable of acquitting himself well on such an occasion, as the studious man.

AND after this shall we be to seek for the most likely method to give a facility of speaking in public? To form writers, you train them  
from



from the beginning in the practice of writing ; to form speakers you must train them from the beginning in the practice of speaking. Whether in such a constitution as ours, gentlemen destined for the senate-house, the pulpit, or the bar, require to have their talents in writing or speaking most cultivated, let the wise determine.

LET parents in general be asked whether they would rather have their sons writers or speakers ; whether they would have their names known as authors of pretty essays, or as remarkable for eloquence in the senate-house, the bar, or the pulpit ? Supposing a necessity of the alternative, there can be no doubt which they would prefer. But when it is considered that there is no way so certain to make them good writers, as to make them good speakers ; that the same habit which gives fluency to the tongue, will also give freedom to the pen ; and that the same cultivation which forms the ear to harmonious and expressive cadences in delivery, must also communicate those qualities to the stile of the writer, if the two arts are carried on together ; and on the contrary when we consider that the utmost attention to written language will never in the least improve the faculties of speech, or talents of delivery, but rather impede than bring them forwards, as bookish men are observed to be more defective than others in those points ; is it not amazing that all pains and attention in the course of education are given to the latter art, and none at all to the former ? As if we were a nation of deaf men, who could have no use of our tongues, and were obliged to transact all affairs by writing. But such is the power of custom !

YET of all the prejudices which have prevailed in this country, there is one which seems to have the least foundation in reason, although it is the most inveterate and hard to be removed of any ; I mean an opinion before mentioned which too generally prevails, that



that we have no occasion to study our native language, because the knowlege of it will come to us of course. And this is a point maintained with great vehemence by many persons, who at the same time allow that the people who understand English well are exceedingly few in number, and that no quality is more rare than correctness in speaking or writing it. How then can it be true that the knowlege of it will come of course? This prejudice can have no other foundation but that the study of English has not as yet been made a branch of education; for if that, as well as the study of other languages, had been part of the course, the very same men who now consider it as unnecessary, would upon the same principle, (prejudice of education) look upon it as a most essential point, and esteem any man a madman or a fool, who should propose to have it omitted as useless.

To such as are not so far bigotted on this head as to exclude all reasoning, I shall beg leave to observe, that against their opinion are the united judgements of some of the ablest men that this country has produced, who had well weighed the point, and must be allowed to be competent judges of it. These are Milton, Dryden, Locke, Addison, Berkley, and Swift; who have all in their turns pointed out that gross defect in our education, and shewed the necessity there is of making the study of our language a material part of it.

BUT if the authority of these Moderns will not weigh with them, what will they say to the practice of those great Ancients, whom they hold in such high reverence, as to think no pains too great when bestowed upon the study of their languages, while they neglect their own? Do they not know that the first study of the boy at Athens was that of his native language, and that it was the last study



study quitted by the man? Do they not know that this was the case at Rome also in its most flourishing state? And what was the consequence of this general care and attention to that point? Did not those two countries produce such numbers of excellent orators and writers, as the whole world has not equalled? Have not their languages gained immortality, while those of such nations as did not study theirs, have perished with the people, or changed with the generations? Which of the two examples is most worthy of imitation?

BUT still if there are persons who will allow no weight to the authority, and practice of the Ancients, and who will persevere in their opinion founded upon the authority and practice of our forefathers; let them be told that they are joining with all the Barbarians of the world, not only against the polished notions of antiquity, but those of the present times. All barbarous nations agree in not studying or cultivating their languages, and this is one of the characteristic marks of barbarism. All civilized countries agree in studying and cultivating their languages, and this is amongst the first proofs given of their politeness. To omit the practice of the Ancients, have we not instances of this in the French, Italians, Spaniards, nay of late in the Germans, and even the Russians? But the Englishman will be apt to ask whether it is possible, considering the just title which his country has to stand amongst the foremost in point of literature, that any nations in the world should dare to class them amongst Barbarians? To whom it may be answered, indeed they will; and think you so too, whilst you neglect the only means by which it is in your power to give them ocular proof of your being a people perfectly civilized, that is by opening to their view the treasures of your language.

VOLTAIRE proclaims your barbarism through Europe, and his authority will go a great way, as his writings are more universally



read than those of all your authors put together. And this only because he writes in a language which is easily acquired, on account of the pains taken to reduce it to rule and method. What avail your boastings of the excellence of your writers to the neighbouring nations, if it be rendered impracticable for them to see that excellence? or what credit will they give to your vaunts? Is there any barbarous nation without their bards of whom they are as vain as you can be? In the literary world nothing will be allowed to authority on these occasions, they will judge only of what they see. 'Tis churlish, 'tis inhospitable to shut your neighbours out as it were from all free communication with you, by the impenetrability of your language. They will hold it to be poor and not worth the cost of polishing, otherwise you could not thus neglect it. However you may be upheld by national pride at home, your character will sink abroad, in the learned world. Is it not a scandal to this country to have it said with truth, by every foreigner who visits this island, and enquires for a master to teach him the language, that no such person is to be found; when in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany, multitudes offer themselves to strangers, perfectly qualified to make them adepts in their several tongues? If you are a true Englishman, and have the honour and interest of your country at heart, you will throw away this prejudice, and join in promoting a design to wash off this strong stain of barbarism, which still rests upon this kingdom.

For what nobler end could a society be instituted? And if even interested views alone be consulted, what parent who has the welfare of his children at heart, will refuse to throw in his mite on this occasion? Parents alone will be sufficient to compass the point, but there are others interested in the event as well as they; nay there are few British subjects who are not in some degree concerned. If there be any who wish to have the English language fixed to a standard;



standard; any admirers of Shakespear, Milton, and Swift, who would contribute towards immortalizing their work, and handing them down to latest posterity: If there are any friends to our excellent constitution, who would be desirous of seeing the number of its guardians increased, by the increase of able speakers in parliament: If there be any who would contribute to the support of our pure religion, by furnishing the priesthood with their true arms, the weapons of oratory; and enabling them to perform Divine Service, so as that it shall not appear to be a mock-worship; they must, they will, if they have these, or any of these points at heart, set down their names in the list of the ENGLISH SOCIETY instituted for the purposes of refining and ascertaining the English language, and for the establishment of the Art of Elocution.



IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION. &c.

standards; any admirers of Shakspeare, Milton, and Swift, who would continue to value immortalizing their work, and holding them down to later posterity: If there are any friends to our noblest constitution, who would be desirous of having the rights of its guardians secured, by the interests of this species in particular: If there be any who would contribute to the support of our pure religion, by turning the profit of their own work, the weapons of error; and enjoining them to perform Divine Service, so as that it shall not appear to be a task-work; they will, if they have these, or any of these points at heart, be down with names in the Hall of the London Society, and for the purpose of raising and educating the English language, and for the improvement of the Art of Education.

7



A  
DISSERTATION  
ON THE  
CAUSES  
OF THE  
DIFFICULTIES,

Which occur, in learning the ENGLISH TONGUE.

With a SCHEME for publishing

An ENGLISH GRAMMAR

AND

DICTIONARY,

Upon a PLAN entirely New.

The Object of which shall be, to facilitate the Attainment of the  
ENGLISH TONGUE, and establish a *Perpetual Standard* of  
PRONUNCIATION.

Addressed to a certain NOBLE LORD.



DISSERTATION

ON THE

USE

OF THE

DIFFICULTIES

Which occur in learning the English Tongue

With a Scheme for teaching

AN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

AND

DICTIONARY

Upon a Plan entirely New

The Object of which is to facilitate the attainment of the

English Tongue, and establish a System of

Pronunciation

Added to a certain Number of



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T O

## A certain NOBLE LORD.

My LORD,

I HAVE particular reasons for chusing to address you in this manner, without proclaiming your stile and title to the world. The way was open to me, by the sollicitation of friends, to have obtained your Lordship's permission of addressing you in the usual form. But, my Lord, I would not chuse on this occasion, to be considered in the light of an author; of one who makes books for hire, and counts upon the dedication-purse as part of his wages. I would rather wish to be considered as a man, who after much thought, application, and labour, has formed a plan, the execution of which may contribute highly to the benefit of these realms. I have pitched upon your Lordship, in my own mind, as the properest personage to promote such an undertaking, because you have it most in your power; and I am informed by those who are best acquainted with your Lordship, that no one is more likely to have it in his inclination.

BUT as it is of great moment, that he who takes the lead in promoting a design of this nature, should have the cause at heart, I have



for this reason also, declined any application to your Lordship, in the usual way. The undertaking is an arduous one: it will require zeal in the patron; and can not be effectually promoted, or carried into execution, by any luke-warm encouragement, which is the usual effect of the common methods of sollicitation. In this way of laying it before your Lordship, it will be soon known whether you will voluntarily enter upon the office, and in that case only, should I hope for success to the design, from your Lordship's patronage.

To shew the benefits that would accrue to the public from the execution of the proposed plan, there needs only to lay the following Queries before the world; and the answers to them from all men of understanding, will place that article in a clear light.

WHETHER it would not contribute much to promote the cause of religion, if the Service of the Church were always performed with propriety, and sermons delivered with due force?

WHETHER it would not be of service to the state, if all our senators, who had from nature the abilities, should also be furnished from art and practice, with the habitual power of delivering their sentiments readily, in a correct, perspicuous, and forcible manner? And whether this would not be equally useful to the gentlemen of the bar?

WHETHER it would not contribute much to the ease and pleasure of society, and improvement of politeness, if all gentlemen in public meetings, or private company, should be able to express their thoughts clearly, and with an utterance so regulated as not to give pain to the understanding, or offence to the ears of their auditors?



WHETHER the first step necessary to the accomplishment of these points, be not the opening a method, whereby all children of these realms, whether male or female, may be instructed from the first rudiments, in a grammatical knowlege of the English tongue, and the art of reading and speaking with propriety and grace; in the same regular way, as other languages, and other arts, of infinitely less consequence to them, are now taught?

WHETHER it would not greatly contribute to put an end to the odious distinction kept up between subjects of the same king, if a way were opened, by which the attainment of the English tongue in its purity, both in point of phraseology and pronunciation, might be rendered easy to all inhabitants of his Majesty's dominions, whether of South or North Britain; of Ireland, or the colonies?

WHETHER it would not redound much to the honour of this nation, if the attainment of our tongue were rendered easy to foreigners, so as to enable them to read our excellent authors in the original?

WHETHER many important advantages would not accrue both to the present age, and to posterity, if the English language were ascertained, and reduced to a fixed and permanent standard?

THESE are questions which can have but one answer from all men of sense. Some of our greatest writers have shewn the necessity of accomplishing these points; but as none of them have pointed out the means by which it might be done, the design is thought to be impracticable.

SWIFT indeed, in a letter to Lord Oxford, proposes that a society should be established, to consider of ways and means for bringing



about some of these purposes ; but I have in \* another place shewn, that little was to be expected, from the labours of such a society, even had the proposal taken place.

BUT, my Lord, I do not approach you with so vague and discouraging a proposal. I have not ventured to lay any before you, 'till I had well considered the means, by which all these points may be accomplished : Means, which if properly applied, cannot fail of attaining their ends, in a much shorter space of time, than can easily be imagined. I am the more emboldened to make this assertion, because the whole plan has undergone the examination of some of the ablest heads in these realms, who all agree in its practicability, according to the method proposed.

THE first necessary step towards it, will be the publication of such a grammar, and dictionary, as is here proposed. This must be the foundation of the whole, and that once well laid, the superstructure, stupenduous as the fabric may seem in idea, might soon be finished. If your Lordship should entertain any doubt of this, upon being honoured with your commands, I shall lay the model before you, and shew also that there will be no deficiency of materials, when once the work shall be set about.

I WOULD not wish to be considered by your Lordship in the light of a person who is soliciting a favour, and endeavouring to compass a point that may turn out to his own private benefit, under the specious appearance of public good. No, my Lord, I am soliciting no favour for myself, and my motives in making this proposal are

\* British Education, Book II. Chap. 10.



so far from being selfish, that I am convinced I am acting against my interest; I am acting too against the opinion and advice of most of my friends, who consider it in the same light. There are other ways open to me of raising a larger fortune to my family, than I could reasonably expect in this, and with infinitely less labour to myself. And I have given the preference to this, merely from a conviction that I shall have lived a much more useful member of society, in the one way, than in the other.

BUT yet I do not carry my notions to such a romantic height, as to be insensible to the interests of my family, the calls of duty, and the ties of nature. I would not enter into the undertaking, without a moral certainty, that my income should not greatly fall short of what I might reasonably expect to make by pursuing another course. The extraordinary labour that will attend it (and very laborious indeed will the execution of it be) I am willing to submit to, without any other reward in view, than the inward satisfaction arising from the accomplishment of so useful a design.

ON the other hand, it appears to me that your Lordship is much more nearly interested in the event of this undertaking. Blest as you are in the possession of the best gifts of fortune, a noble birth, an exalted station, and ample possessions, from what sources can a mind such as your's, derive addition to its happiness, so great, as from the discharge of your duty to your king and country? Whence can such funds of inward satisfaction arise, as from your using your best endeavours to contribute to the glory of your royal master's reign, and to deserve the praises and good will of all your fellow-subjects. If your Lordship will attentively weigh the consequences of carrying such a plan into execution, you will find, that all these desirable ends, are more likely to be obtained in a higher degree



this way, than perhaps in any other. What can be more worthy of the attention of an English king, than the English language? Of a king who glories in the name of Briton, than the spreading that language in its purity, thro'out his British dominions? What can add more lustre to his reign, than to have it on record, that it was in that reign, so useful an institution first took place? How will it stand distinguished from those of his predecessors, by whom, unhappily for these kingdoms, so material an article was wholly overlooked! The people of these realms are highly indebted to your Lordship, for the share you are well known to have had, in forming a king, fit to govern a free nation. A king, who had he no claim to the crown, from right of inheritance, would have been intitled to it, if elective, from merit. Nothing could now give you a juster claim to the thanks of your royal master, than the pursuing the best means of forming the rising generation in such a way, as to make them fit subjects for such a monarch; fit instruments to carry all his wise and gracious purposes, for the good of these realms, into execution. And with regard to your fellow-subjects, all parents must have the strongest sense of gratitude to a man, who has put it in their power to have their children trained in such a way, as to make them wiser, and better men, than their fathers: The rising generation must look on you as a second father; and posterity will adore your name.

I know I shall be looked upon as very antiquated, and unfashionable in my notions, in offering any argument on the last score, that of *posterity* I mean, as a motive to action. The maxim of the Oxford Fellow, that *of taking care of the present times, and letting posterity shift for itself*, seems to have been adopted by all our English ministers. -And accordingly, *they have had their reward*; not one of their names having had any reverence paid to it by posterity.



Whilst that of Richlieu, the French minister, stands distinguished in the list, not only in his own country, but in the eyes of all Europe, chiefly on the account of institutions established by him, of the same nature here recommended, whereof posterity was to receive the principal benefit. It is in your power, my Lord, to stand single with respect to the list of your predecessors, and foremost with regard to those, who shall hereafter have elevation of mind sufficient to follow your example.

It is in your power, my Lord, to furnish an occasion for some future historian, to mark this æra out, as one of the most memorable in the whole English history. You may enable him to say,  
 “ That it was in the year 1762, that the first establishment was  
 “ made in Great Britain, for the study of the English language,  
 “ and the art of speaking. How much are we indebted (proceeds  
 “ the historian) to that glorious institution! It is owing to that,  
 “ that our senate has been furnished with such numbers of powerful,  
 “ and well practiced speakers, as to banish the giant corruption,  
 “ with his hundred hands, from this realm of freedom. It is  
 “ owing to that, that the sacred ministry have been able to discharge  
 “ the most important part of their function; and to impress  
 “ the precepts of our pure religion, so strongly on the hearts of their  
 “ hearers, as to make them Christians, not in profession only, but  
 “ in practice. It is owing to that, that the ambiguity and obscurity  
 “ of our laws, have given way to clearness and precision; and  
 “ the delay and tediousness of suits, the accounts of which in those  
 “ days, almost exceed belief, were banished, to make way for the  
 “ present easy and speedy method of obtaining justice, and settling  
 “ all matters of property and right. It is to that noble institution  
 “ we are indebted, for the refinement and establishment of the  
 “ English language, upon so solid a foundation, that time shall no  
 “ more



“ more prevail against it, than it has against the languages of old  
 “ Greece and Rome; and Milton and Shakespear shall not perish,  
 “ but with Homer and Virgil, in the general dissolution of the  
 “ world.

“ It is amazing, when we reflect that our ancestors, animated  
 “ as they were by the most enthusiastic spirit of liberty, and strug-  
 “ gling for ages, with a courage and resolution not to be matched  
 “ in story, to establish a free constitution both in church and state,  
 “ should never before that period, have thought of securing those  
 “ valuable blessings to their posterity, by cultivating those powers,  
 “ which alone could support that constitution, either in religious,  
 “ or civil affairs, the powers of oratory. This point may indeed  
 “ well astonish any one, who has not sufficiently weighed the force  
 “ of custom. How much therefore are we indebted to that truly  
 “ patriot spirit, who at that juncture, broke the fetters of the ty-  
 “ rant, snapped asunder the bonds of prejudice, and gave rise to  
 “ those institutions, which have since flourished in so eminent a  
 “ degree, and been productive of all our most valuable enjoyments :  
 “ Which secured those blessings to us, that have raised our country  
 “ to a pitch beyond that of Athens or Rome, and made it at once  
 “ the envy, and the wonder of the world.

“ It is true an attempt of this kind was made in the reign of  
 “ James the First, by the Duke of Buckingham; and we are in-  
 “ formed by Swift, that in the reign of Queen Anne, the earl of  
 “ Oxford intended to revive it. But the execution of this ex-  
 “ cellent design, was reserved to adorn the opening of the reign of  
 “ George the Third. The success of it was intirely owing to the  
 “ zealous endeavours of ——”



HERE, my Lord, is a blank——The name of that minister which shall fill it, will be more memorable in future times than that of Mæcenæ; and the name of his royal master, superiour to that of Augustus.

I SHALL add no more, but that all things are ready to carry the design into execution, provided there be sufficient encouragement. Yours be the honour, let the nation reap the benefit. I am,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP'S

*most obedient,*

*and devoted*

*humble Servant,*

THOMAS SHERIDAN.



First, my Lord, is a blank. The name of that minister  
is not in fact in it with as much prominence in future times than  
that of Ministers, and the name of his royal master, according to  
that of Augustus.

I am not at all at ease, but that all things are ready to carry  
the business of the nation, provided there be sufficient, common  
information. I am the poorest, for the nation keep the pen  
I am.

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OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN  
THE  

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A  
DISSERTATION, &c.

**I**T is a truth well known, that when a foreigner arrives in London, and enquires for a master to teach him the language of the country, there is no such person to be found; nor is there any method open to him, by which he may be assisted, in attaining a just manner of speaking English.

THIS is not the case in the more southern countries of Europe, such as Italy, France, and Spain; where foreigners may be taught to speak the respective tongues of those countries, with the utmost propriety, by skilful masters, with the aid of proper grammars and dictionaries.

ON this account it is, that the English are still classed by the people of those countries, amongst the more rude, and scarcely civilized nations of the North. They affix the term of barbarism to this country, in the same manner as the Greeks did to the rest of the world; and on the same principle, on account of the neglect of regulating and polishing our speech. It was on that account chiefly that the Greeks looked down upon the rest of the world with contempt; nor did they make any distinction between the Romans

H h

their



their conquerors, and other nations, including them under the common denomination of Barbarians; 'till the Romans, by a like application to the culture of their language, became their rivals in that article, and have had their names ever since joined to them, in contradistinction to all other nations of antiquity.

AND indeed, a neglect of their speech, is not only a characteristic mark of barbarism in all nations, but the sure means of continuing them in that state; as on the contrary, the regulation and refinement of language is a necessary step towards introducing politeness. It is therefore much to be wished, for the honour, as well as interest of this country, than an article of such importance, should no longer be so shamefully neglected.

THE great difficulty of the English tongue lies in the pronunciation; an exactness in which, after all the pains they can take, is found to be unattainable, not only by foreigners, but \* provincials. The chief cause of this, has been the want of method in teaching it, by a well digested system of rules. Some of our grammarians indeed, begin their work with a definition, that would lead us to expect a regular treatise on this subject. They set out with telling us that grammar consists of two parts, Orthoëpy, or the just manner of pronouncing; and Orthography, or the just manner of writing words. So that they define grammar to be the art of teaching people to speak, and write correctly, according to the custom of those whose language we learn. But after they have made this distinction, they scarce take any farther notice of Orthoëpy, and their whole pains are employed about the other article, Orthogra-

\* By Provincials is here meant all British subjects, whether inhabitants of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the several counties of England, or the city of London, who speak a corrupt dialect of the English tongue.



phy. They were deterred from that part of the work by the immense difficulty of the undertaking; and as there never has been any public encouragement to such a work, either by societies, or royal munificence, (means which produced the regulation and refinement of their several tongues in neighbouring countries) there has been no one hardy enough to engage in the task, upon a precarious prospect of reward.

THIS is the task on which I am now employed; to restore the first, and noblest part of grammar, to its just rank and power; and to reduce the other to its due state of subordination: to make the spoken language, as it ought to be, the archetype; of which, the written language should be considered only as the type.

IN order to this, I shall first trace the difficulties, which lie in the way of such an undertaking, to their source; and then, by shewing how all obstacles may be removed, point out an easy way to the accomplishment of the design.

THE chief difficulty arises, from the little care there has been taken, to preserve any analogy between the written, and the spoken language; the spelling, and the pronunciation of words: as also a neglect of analogy, in the rules, by which the written language, considered by itself, without reference to speech, ought to be governed. That the English reader may see this difficulty in its proper light, I shall here present him with some specimens of the irregularity, and confusion, every where to be found in the graphic art. Otherwise, having by long practice overcome the difficulty, he may not think it so great as it is; nor see the true reason, that a just pronunciation of English, is found so impracticable a point to foreigners and provincials.



## No. 1.

	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Fifth</i>
A	hat	hate	hall		
E	bet	there	here	her	
I	fit	bite	field	stir	birth
o	not	note	prove	love	
u	cub	bush	cube	busy	

## No. 2.

Different sounds marked exactly in the same way.

There	here		grove	prove	love	
Fourth	youth	mouth	tough		who	go
Door	noon	blood		bear	hear	head

## No. 3.

The same sounds marked in different ways.

	2d a		3d e
ai	fail	}	he
ay	day		ee
ey	they		ea
eigh	weigh		ie
eig	reign		ei
			3d e
			he
			seem
			veal
			field
			deceive

3d a



	3d a		2d o
aw	draw	{	go
au	cause		blow
all	fall		shew
ald	bald		foe
alk	talk		fourth
oa	broad		door
ough	ought		groan
augh	caught		

	3d o		1st u
o	who	{	bud
oo	noon		blood
omb	tomb		tough
ou	youth		word
			bird
			her

	3d u
u	cube
eu	feud
ew	new
ue	clue
iew	view

ON looking over the above Scheme, we shall perceive in No. 1. that every vowel stands as a mark for three, four, or five different sounds. In No. 2, that two, three, or four different sounds are marked exactly in the same way. In No. 3, that the same sound is marked in four, five, six, seven, or eight different ways.

So



So much for the irregularity in the use of our vowels; nor shall we find the state of our consonants much better.

C has three sounds

k	care
s	cease
sh	social

F has its sound marked by two different combinations of letters

Ph	Philip
gh	laugh

G has two sounds

gold
gentle

j has the same sound as that of 2d G

joy
gentle

S has four sounds

s	yes
z	rose
sh	passion
zh	osier

T also has four sounds

t	tell
s	fatigues
sh	nation
ch	question

X has three sounds

gz	example
ks	vex
z	Xerxes

Th has two sounds

dh	then
th	thin



Ch has three sounds

k

chorus

sh

chaife

ch

charity

Gh has two sounds

g

ghost

f

laughter

and is often mute, as in

daughter

THIS is but a small specimen, of the irregularities to be found in the state of our written language; yet it may serve to shew, how difficult, nay impossible, the attempt must be, to acquire a knowledge of the true pronunciation of English, unless the learner be furnished with a proper clue, to guide him through this labyrinth.

WORDS written, may be considered two ways; either as types of sounds, which stand for ideas; or, immediate types of ideas, without any reference to sound. Deaf men can consider them only in the latter light: To those who have the organs of hearing, they may stand in both, or either.

WHEN written words are considered only as the types of sounds, in order to make them correspond to their archetypes, the four following rules should be strictly observed:

1. No character should be set down in any word, which is not pronounced.

2. EVERY distinct simple sound, should have a distinct character to mark it; for which, it should uniformly stand.

3. THE same character should never be set down, as the representative of two different sounds.

4. ALL



4. ALL compound sounds, should be marked only by such characters, as will naturally, and necessarily produce those sounds, upon being properly pronounced, in the order in which they are placed.

THESE rules were strictly observed in the justly celebrated language of old Greece, and, in a great measure also, in that of Rome after the refinement of their tongue; insomuch that the knowledge of their alphabet alone, and of the power of the several letters, together with the manner of joining them in forming syllables and words; enabled every one, without further aid of rules or masters, to pronounce their words properly in reading, excepting in the article of quantity: And their graphic art wanted nothing of perfection, but some marks, to distinguish the long, from the short sounds of the vowels. Whereas in the English all these rules are so frequently violated, or rather so totally disregarded, that no assistance can at present be derived to pronunciation from reading.

SUCH indeed is the state of our written language, that the darkest hieroglyphics, or most difficult cyphers, which the art of man has hitherto found out, were not better calculated to conceal the sentiments of those who used them, from all who had not the key, than the state of our spelling is, to conceal the true pronunciation from all, except a few well educated natives. Nay, our spelling is built upon so perverse a principle, that it is laid down as a maxim, by one who took great pains to examine its state, that all words which can be sounded different ways, must be written according to the hardest, harshest, longest, and most unusual sound. As this erroneous and perplexed state of our orthography is the true reason that our language is so little sought after abroad, or studied at home; that its true pronunciation is so impracticable to foreigners, and so seldom to be met with in natives; that it is thought to have such

8 barbarism



barbarism in sound by those of other countries, who judge of the state of its sound from the manner of spelling words in books; and that its true powers and beauty are so little known by those whose mother tongue it is, but who have never turned their thoughts to examine it in its living state, passing judgement on it likewise from its written state, as foreigners do: As all these evils arise chiefly from that cause, there cannot be a matter of more importance in the subject, which I have undertaken, than to lay open the source of this irregularity and confusion.

THE chief cause of the irregular state of our spelling, will at once appear, when we reflect that we have adopted the Roman alphabet to be the representative of our sounds. Now if we have a greater number of simple sounds in our tongue, than there are letters in that alphabet, it must necessarily follow that the surplus number of simple sounds can have no peculiar characters to represent them in writing; and consequently, that either they must be marked by single characters, which stand also for other sounds; or by combinations of characters, which, separately taken, stand for other simple sounds.

THIS was not the case of the Greeks and Romans, who had each an alphabet of their own, peculiarly adapted to their several tongues; in which every simple sound had its distinct mark, by which it was uniformly and invariably represented; nor did the same character ever stand for two different sounds, nor was any simple sound ever marked by more than one character, except to distinguish quantity, as in the eta and omega of the Greeks: As the Romans had a greater number of sounds in their tongue, they had also a greater number of letters.



SUCH was the case of the old Saxons also, and the several nations of Europe, before the revival of ancient literature; each having an alphabet to their respective tongues, though not framed or used by those Barbarians, with that exactness and accuracy which were so conspicuous in those enlightened and civilized countries. Upon the revival of learning the Latin tongue was held in such universal admiration, and came into such general use, that by common consent the Roman alphabet, which became known to all the learned by this means, was adopted to be the common representative of all the different tongues of the several nations of Europe, in which ancient literature was established. This could not happen without prejudice to analogy between speech and writing in all those countries; and therefore it required great pains in their several grammarians, and a multitude of rules, to adjust the difference between them; which however has been tolerably well accomplished by those nations, who have wisely taken the pains to establish such a regulation, and by that means rendered the knowledge of their several tongues, and the speaking them with propriety, easy to learners. But the English, upon this occasion, were greater sufferers than any other people; for having a greater number of simple sounds in their tongue than any of the rest, there was a proportional deficiency of letters to be their symbols; and unless they had proceeded by certain and well grounded rules, in marking those supernumerary sounds, by steady combinations of letters, there was the greatest danger that the utmost confusion would ensue. But this was done amongst us, with so little judgement or regard to order, that chance and caprice only seemed to bear sway, in modeling the spelling by the new alphabet. All the rules of orthography, by which the wise nation, from whom we borrowed the letters, regulated theirs, were broken thro' and wholly disregarded. The disorder in a short time so infected the whole mass of our language, that it was judged  
to



to be incurable; and all attempts towards a remedy, proved so ineffectual, as to confirm men in that opinion, and turn their thoughts from so vain a pursuit. When this point was given up, the spirit of pedantry, which then universally prevailed, suggested a new use of written language, unknown to the Greeks and Romans, by which these pedants, as far as lay in their power, endeavoured to make a change in its very nature and end, and consequently in the rules by which it was to be governed. They contended, that the principal object in spelling, ought not to be to guide learners to the true pronunciation of words, but to assist the understanding in finding out their meaning; by preserving such letters, and placing them in such order as might best point out their derivation, and recal to mind the words in the original languages (but more particularly the Latin) from which they were borrowed and adopted by us.

Thus multitudes of letters were preserved in writing, that had no found in uttering the words in which they were to be seen; and the use of vowels and diphthongs, together with their several powers, were all confounded; as it was determined that such as were in the original should maintain their post in writing, though in pronunciation, the sounds of different vowels and diphthongs should be heard. Thus were these two kinds of language, the spoken and the written, which in all reason should have been as inseparable as body and shadow, still farther disunited by the joint endeavours of pedantry and barbarism, contrary to the practice of the Greeks and Romans. As the pedants had no power over the pronunciation of our language, all words adopted into our tongue, were made in time to conform to the mode of our speech, according to the rules of our own analogy in pronouncing, not that of the nations from which they were derived; they were fitted to the English organs, admitted as denizens, and made free of the language. But the



pedants, who had great power over the written language, resolved that these words should always retain the marks of their foreign extraction in writing, and wear a perpetual badge of distinction from natives; and the specious reason they have assigned for this proceeding is, that written language is in this way better calculated to assist the understanding, which is a more important end, than assisting pronunciation.

ON the other hand, it was warmly contended that words ought to be spelt as they are pronounced; and no doubt this opinion might have been supported by such unanswerable reasons, that notwithstanding the power of custom, the force of fashion, and the efforts of pedantry against it, it must in time have made way, and our spelling would have been gradually reformed and moulded by that rule, were there not an unseen obstacle in the way arising from a defective alphabet. The thing was indeed impracticable, according to the method they pursued, but not perceived to be so, for the cause was unknown; which gave rise to many successive fruitless efforts. The sticklers for derivation, indulged a literary vanity; and the partisans of pronunciation, knew they had common sense on their side, in the point which they had in view, but had not gone deep enough into the subject to see the chief difficulty in their way in the pursuit of it. Between these there was a sort of moderating party, who on many occasions, reserved some letters as marks of derivation, and added others as marks of pronunciation. As in the word *honour* derived from *honor* in the Latin, and sounded by us as if it were spelt *onnur*, they preserved the *h* and the *o* to shew its derivation, and added the *u* to mark the sound. The same is to be observed of the *o* in *favour*, *labour*, and many others. But of late pedantry has taken up arms against the *u*, banished it as an intruder, and introduced the sheer Latin words into English. Many  
8
successive,



ſucceſſive, and alternate innovations, on the ſeveral principles, have kept our written language in a continual ſtate of fluctuation; and theſe, together with a defective alphabet, the regulation of which was originally left to caprice and faſhion, have made our written language appear ſo completely a chaos, that it has been hitherto thought impoſſible, to find either rule or order in it; and the knowlege of it at preſent is hardly to be obtained by the utmoſt efforts of induſtry.

WHILST the diſpute between the oppoſite parties remains unſettled, it is impoſſible that the part of the confuſion, which is occaſioned by it, can be removed; and if, upon adjusting the difference between them, the remedy would offer itſelf, and were within reach, nothing would be ſo eaſy as to ſhew that all the arguments advanced by the advocates for derivation, however ſpecious at firſt view, are, in reality, to the laſt degree weak and frivolous; and have taken their riſe wholly from a partial and miſtaken view of the end and uſe of written language. And on the other hand, it might be demonſtrated, by more cogent arguments than any hitherto uſed, that the advocates for ſpelling according to pronunciation, are engaged in a juſt cauſe; which they know not how to defend, from want of a full comprehension of the ſubject; and that they have failed of their end, by endeavouring to uſe means, which are utterly inadequate to the attainment of it. But as the ſettling this point would only clear the way for alleviating a ſmall part of the diſeaſe, whoſe ſource lies deeper, in the very vitals, in the alphabet itſelf; I ſhall not waſte my time in examining the branching ſtreams, but go at once to the fountain head.

IT is well known that the written language, in its preſent ſtate, is by no means a guide to a right pronunciation of the Engliſh tongue.

To



To the truth of this, not only all foreigners, but the Irish, the Scotch, the Welsh, the inhabitants of the several counties of England, nay of the very metropolis itself, can bear testimony. And even amongst the few who are masters of the true pronounciation, it might be proved that they are in no shape indebted for it to books. Is there a man deficient in this respect, either foreigner, who is desirous of speaking it, or native, who uses it as his mother tongue, in the corrupt state, which custom has established, in the place of his birth or education, that does not wish the means of acquiring the polite and most approved pronounciation were in his power? To satisfy the desire and supply the wants of all such is the intention of the plan which I have to offer on this head. For them, and for them only, is it calculated; nor ought the opinion of such, as find no want of this kind, be asked, or their suffrages taken. They are indeed but too ready to pronounce that they see no occasion for any thing of this kind, because they expect no benefit to themselves to be derived from it; but this selfish judgement of a few, ought not to have any weight against the interest of foreigners in general, and ninety nine in a hundred of his majesty's subjects; let me add also, against the interests of the English language itself. All such as think they can not be benefited by it, will shew themselves candid, by being neutral; or generous, by promoting the plan, if it meets with their approbation. The plan itself is well worthy the attention of those, who do not hope benefit from it, on account of the end proposed by it; which is no less than laying down a method, by which foreigners, as well as natives, may acquire the true pronounciation of English, by the assistance of books chiefly; in spite of the supposed impracticability of such a design.

THE pronounciation of a language may be acquired either from conversation or books. The latter method, for the reasons already  
4 assigned,



assigned, is wholly given up in our tongue; and the pronunciation of all natives of these countries, is entirely formed, from the custom which prevails in the places of their respective birth and education. The dialects are different, not only in the several countries, but counties of the same country. The standard of pronunciation is affixed to the custom which prevails amongst people of education at court, so that none but such as are born and bred up amongst them, or have constant opportunities of conversing with them, and that too in early years, before the pliant organs have taken their bent, can be said to be masters of it: And these are but a few compared to the millions who speak the same tongue, and can not have such opportunity. Now if a method of acquiring a just pronunciation by books, as well as conversation, were established, the acquisition would not be circumscribed within such narrow bounds, but would lie open to all British subjects wherever born, as well as to all foreigners, with but little aid from masters. This would be making a noble use of the invention of printing, which might have given us such an advantage over the Ancients in this respect, as well as many others; but which, thro' the abuse of it, it is to be feared has done more harm than good. If the standard of pronunciation had been affixed to the written language, it is evident how permanent it might have been rendered by fixed marks; and how universally it might have been spread by means of the press, and the cheapness of books, which has made the art of reading (confined to the opulent chiefly amongst the Ancients) familiar to the lowest people. Let us therefore examine, in the first place, whether it was practicable to have made the written language a guide to just pronunciation, supposing that to have been the object on the first regulation and attempts to settle it; and afterwards, from a view of its deficiencies, and inability to answer that end, in its present state, whether some method may not be found out to supply those defects,

and



and give it still power to ascertain the pronunciation, and to serve as a sure guide to learners.

HOWEVER evident it may be to a diligent enquirer, that written language might be made a perfect standard of pronunciation, or that words might be so spelt upon paper, as that every one acquainted with the true power of the letters, and the rules of spelling, should, upon the view, be able to sound them properly; yet will it be far from appearing in this light, to such as have never considered the written language, farther than in its present defective and irregular state. In order to shew the practicability of the thing, in the easiest and clearest manner to all apprehensions, I shall beg of those who have any doubt about it, to compare the state of the graphic art, which represents articulate sounds, with that of her sister art, which represents those of the inarticulate kind; I mean, the art of writing words, with that of writing musical notes. In the latter art, every sound, which can possibly be produced in harmonious compositions, has its peculiar and distinct character in writing; and all combinations of such sounds, are so exactly pointed out by settled, steady, visible marks, both with regard to tone and time, that whoever has once made himself master of their powers, can never be mistaken in reading music. Hence it is that the written language of music is become universal, and is to be learned with equal ease and certainty by the natives of all countries. And has not this given a vast superiority to the musical graphic art, over the rhetorical? Ought this to be the case? Are inarticulate sounds of more consequence to mankind than the articulate? Is music superior in utility to poetry or oratory; let me add, even in charms? Is the instrument by which one of the senses only is gratified, and a transient pleasure obtained, of more value than one, whereby the same sense may be equally gratified, and at  
the



the same time knowlege acquired, the understanding enlarged, and the power encreased of communicating all the noblest affections and emotions from soul to soul? If not, why such care, such accuracy in the one; why such neglect, such confusion in the other? The discussion of these questions will naturally lead us to the very bottom of the subject; and by laying open the causes of the different procedure in these two arts, shew what have been the obstacles in the way, which have prevented the one from arriving at the same perfection as the other, and disclose the means of still accomplishing so desirable a point.

UPON enquiring into the reason of the different states of the two arts, the first observation that occurs is, that the chief and ultimate end of music is to gratify the ear, by pleasing proportions of sounds; but the chief and ultimate end of speech, is to inform the understanding, and the pleasure it may give the ear, is but a secondary one. Consequently it was a more necessary object in the former, to be attentive to exactness in marking sounds, than in the latter art. But there arose a still greater necessity for the utmost nicety and accuracy in the graphic art of music, from another essential difference between music and speech; between the manner of conveying articulate, and inarticulate sounds to the ear. A very little progress in the musical art, would soon convince the professors, that much greater delight would arise from a concert of various instruments, than from any performance on a single one; and as the harmony must arise from their exact correspondence to each other both in time and tune, it was impossible to accomplish this, but by the greatest accuracy in the notes and marks, which distinguished the several sounds and times. From the moment therefore that they set about the work, they must have had a perpetual spur to their industry, till it was accomplished, as nothing short of perfection could



answer the end proposed; for the least defect in either of those articles, must be constantly productive of discord, instead of harmony. Thus we may consider a band of music playing in concert, as a number of persons reading together exactly in the same manner, both in tone and time. But this is not the case with regard to the readers of articulate sounds, or words; which can be read aloud only by one person at a time, so as to be understood by the hearers. And as the being understood is the chief object of the reader of words, and the delight resulting from a just and graceful pronunciation, only a secondary one, the former may in a great measure be accomplished without the latter; and consequently, there is not the same necessity, that the reader of words, should be as complete a master of the tones and proportions of his marks, as the reader of music of his notes; whose chief end is to delight, and who can not accomplish that end, any other way, but by the most accurate knowledge of the several powers of those notes.

FROM this view of the different ends proposed in these two arts, we may see the reason of the different means used to attain those ends. To represent sounds was the ultimate object of the musical graphic art; to represent ideas was the principal one of the rhetorical; and as this might be done without any reference to sound at all, the representation of sounds was not an essential, but only a secondary object. The state of written language therefore has been very different in different nations of the world, according to the object which they had in view in framing it; which may be reduced to three kinds. The first, That, which had ideas for its immediate object, without reference to sounds. The second, That, which had sounds for its immediate object, and whose chief end was to give an exact representation of them, as in the musical art.

The



The third, That which professed to have sounds for its object, but was little solicitous about accuracy in marking them.

THE first of these has been called the language of hieroglyphics; and there is reason to believe both from history and the nature of things, that this was the first kind of written language, or method of communicating ideas by visible marks. This art was known to the Ægyptians previous to the invention of letters; and we find it also in use amongst the Mexicans, when first subdued by the Spaniards. It is natural indeed to suppose that the first attempts to communicate ideas through the eye, would be by drawing the similitude of such things as are the objects of that sense; to delineate for instance the figure of a man, a tree, or a horse, to stand as marks of our ideas of these several objects. And this written language, so far as it could go, was certainly the most perfect, and the types in it were most correspondent to their archetypes. But as the method was exceedingly slow and laborious, and could exhibit only a small part of what passed in the mind, being confined to objects of one sense only, the industry of man was set to work to find out a more easy, expeditious, and comprehensive method of communication in writing; and this ended in the invention of letters; which by being made the symbols of articulate sounds, became capable of conveying knowledge in as extensive a manner as speech, and with equal ease and celerity.

THE utility of this discovery was too apparent, not to be immediately embraced in all countries where it was made known. But very different was the use made of it in different countries, in proportion to the wisdom and good order which prevailed in the different states. The Greeks acknowledged that they were indebted to Barbarians for the invention of letters, but boast that they alone knew



how to make a right use of the invention. They were indeed the first people in the world, who made it one of their chief objects, to regulate and refine their speech, and employed themselves in the task with unwearied industry from generation to generation, till they carried it nearly to perfection. They had too much penetration not to see what use a due attention to the state of writing might be, towards fixing and giving permanence to that perfection, which they had purchased with such labour; and had too much public spirit, and ardour for the glory of their country, not to endeavour to give immortality to the glorious works of their writers. The event has been answerable to their pains and expectations; their language will remain and be held in admiration to the end of time.

THEY were at that juncture the only people who endeavoured to model the graphic art according to its true use and end, according to the second kind which I have mentioned in my division, and which had sounds for its immediate object; and their chief view in the regulation of it was to give an exact representation of those sounds. In this they were afterwards imitated by the Romans. Whilst the eastern countries, amongst whom letters were invented and in use, long before they were carried into Greece, contented themselves with the third state of written language, which had the representation of articulate sounds for its object, but in the execution, was very imperfect and inaccurate. There need be no stronger proof given, of the very defective state, in which the art of writing always remained amongst them, than to mention that the vowels were wholly omitted, and had no characters in the alphabet to mark them; and as it must be allowed, that the vowels are of all letters the most important, both to ascertain the pronunciation, and meaning of words, it must also be granted, that this was an essential defect in the fundamentals, equally obstructing both ends of written

8 language,



language, whether considered as the representative of sense or sound, of ideas or words. The effect has been such as might naturally be expected from such a course; for the result of the enquiries into the ancient languages of the East, has been only endless controversies, about both the meaning and pronunciation, amongst those who have given themselves up to studies of this kind; whilst in the well regulated Greek and Roman writings, the meaning of the words is as well ascertained, as that of any living tongue, and so might the pronunciation also, in a great measure, if it were thought an object worthy of sufficient attention. Though it must be allowed that on account of one small defect in the graphic art, in those countries, there would some difficulties occur, in adjusting exactly the pronunciation, especially as none of their grammars have been handed down to us. As this defect is the only one, which prevented their written language from being in the utmost state of perfection, so far as relates to the pronunciation of words, it deserves to be taken notice of.

It has been already remarked, that the four fundamental rules of orthography, were so strictly observed by them, that no one acquainted with their alphabet and rules of spelling, could make any mistake in pronouncing, as to sound. But as in pronouncing their words, it was of importance to observe quantity, as well as quality, no doubt they should have had some marks, to distinguish the long, from the short sounds of their vowels. This was the only stumbling block in the way of foreigners, which prevented their acquiring an accurate pronunciation of those tongues by reading. The Greeks saw the defect, and began a reformation, by adding the characters of eta and omega to their alphabet, to distinguish the long from the short sounds of epsilon and omicron. Had they done the same by the three other vowels, or even without inventing new characters, affixed.



affixed some marks to distinguish the long from the short sounds, the quantity of their syllables would have been settled to perpetuity; without having recourse to laborious researches into prosody, and a multitude of rules to guide us in that article. And what have all these rules ended in? Not in fixing the true quantity for the speaker, so that it may be distinguished in pronunciation, (in which respect they are but of little use;) but for the writer, that he may be enabled to arrange his words in measure according to the custom of the Ancients. Whilst in general the ear acknowledges no difference in time between the long and the short sounds. But had the other three vowels been distinguished in the same manner, we should not only have had no occasion for any rules of prosody whatsoever in Greek, but we should never have failed to distinguish the long and short quantities to the ear, by the different times taken up in pronouncing them. Of this, there need not be a better proof offered, than what arises from matter of fact, in relation to the two vowels so distinguished; with regard to which, as there was no occasion for any, so are there no rules to be found in prosody; and we never fail to distinguish their quantity to the ear. The Romans did not follow the example of the Greeks so far, as to make any distinction between the marks of the different quantities even of those two vowels, and therefore we are still more liable to mistakes in that respect, in pronouncing Latin, than Greek. And as the Roman alphabet has been adopted by all the nations of Europe, the same defect, of not marking the different quantities of the vowels, prevails in what are called the modern languages.

THUS we see that the art of writing words, was never brought to the degree of perfection of which it was capable, in any age or country, though the Greeks approached nearly to it. The principal defect lay in the vowels, which were wholly omitted by the eastern



eastern nations in general. The Greeks and Romans marked their sounds with great accuracy, but not their quantity. Whilst the Moderns, but particularly the English, are greatly defective in both articles. To bring the art to perfection, it would be only necessary to adhere closely to the rules observed by the Greeks, so far as they went; and to supply the single defect in the article of quantity. The pronunciation of any language, built upon this model, might be acquired by reading, with equal certainty, by inhabitants of the different countries of the globe, with that of music, by assistance of the notes. Nor is this an ideal plan only, for it has in one instance been carried into execution, and by its success, has given proof of the practicability, as well as reasonableness of the design. According to this plan, have the modern Hebræans framed their written language. They reckon thirteen vowels, to which they have assigned thirteen different marks, by which they distinguish both their quantity and quality. Every other sound has its distinct mark, and they are constant in the use of them. If there be a redundant, or quiescent letter, presented to the eye, through custom or analogy in spelling, it has also its peculiar mark, to shew that it is not to be sounded. The consequence of which has been, that the pronunciation of Hebrew in the method here laid down, is rendered so easy, that any one of moderate capacity, with but little assistance from a *Master*, may make himself perfect in it in a few days, so as never to be guilty of an error in reading Hebrew with points. Is there any one who does not wish that that of English were as easily attainable?

BUT to this it will be immediately objected, that however right the design might appear in theory, it would be impossible to carry it into execution. That to follow the example of the latter Hebræans, the whole graphic art must be changed; that new characters



acters must be introduced into the alphabet, to mark all the differences of the vowels, both in quantity and quality ; that there would be no use of these if they were not transferred into our books, which must be all reprinted according to the new alphabet ; that people must be taught their alphabet anew to enable them to read such reprinted books ; that it would be the height of absurdity to suppose such measures practicable, and therefore that the whole scheme, as chimerical, must fall to the ground.

INDEED any design of that sort must prove to the last degree impracticable, and consequently fail of its end. Nor could a thought of this kind enter into the head of any one, who knows that the whole power of a Roman emperor, was in vain exerted, to introduce a single letter into their alphabet, the *Æolic digamma* ; though such a character was confessedly wanting. But in the present scheme it is not proposed that there should be the least change in our alphabet, or alteration made in the mode of writing or spelling English. The object of it is, to fix such a standard of pronunciation, by means of visible marks, that it may be in the power of every one, to acquire an accurate manner of uttering every word in the English tongue, by applying to that standard. In order to this, the author of this scheme proposes to publish a Dictionary, in which the true pronunciation, of all the words in our tongue, shall be pointed out by visible and accurate marks. To effect this, one column shall exhibit the words in alphabetical order as they are written, or spelt ; and in another column, opposite to each word shall be marked its just pronunciation. The principle upon which this is performed is the simplest that can be conceived. Any one of moderate capacity may in an hour's time make himself master of the marks, and then he can no more mistake the pronunciation, than they



they who are acquainted with the notes, can mistake in reading music; or with the points, in reading Hebrew.

To this Dictionary shall be prefixed a Rhetorical Grammar, upon the following plan:

1st, THE number of simple sounds in the English tongue shall be ascertained. Such as have no peculiar letters in our alphabet to represent them shall be pointed out, and have proper marks assigned to them to distinguish them in writing, and proper names in speaking of them.

2dly, ALL such simple sounds as are peculiar to the English shall be pointed out; and the difference in that respect between ours, the French, Italian, Spanish, and German, severally shewn. The manner in which those sounds are formed shall be manifested; and a method laid down whereby masters may speedily teach foreigners to pronounce those sounds, and to make them familiar to the organs, so as to be uttered with ease.

3dly, THE number of our double sounds or diphthongs (an article in which the grossest mistakes have been committed) shall be ascertained; the manner of their formation, and the particular vowels whereof each is compounded, shall be made evident.

4thly, SYLLABLES shall be treated of, and particularly such combinations of letters in syllables, as are peculiar to our tongue, and the manner of sounding them, shall be shewn, and made easy. Under this head also shall be contained such combinations of letters in writing, as produce different sounds in utterance, in any of the abovementioned languages, from what they do in ours.



5thly, Our manner of uniting syllables so as to form words shall be considered, and of distinguishing those syllables from each other in pronunciation, shewing what letters are kept together, and what separated in utterance; often erroneously marked in our grammars and spelling books, whose authors have divided their syllables, by rules that have no reference to pronunciation. Under this head will be laid open the nature and use of our accent, that grand master-key to the pronunciation of our tongue, whose nature has hitherto been little understood, or grossly mistaken. This is evidently shewn in our dictionaries, where the accent is invariably placed over the vowel of the accented syllable. Now nothing is of more moment in our tongue than to know when the accent is on the vowel, and when on the consonant. By placing it constantly over the vowel, there is a rule of error established, which must infallibly mislead provincials and foreigners, in the pronunciation of all words, where the accent ought to be on the consonant. Thus a native of Scotland, upon seeing the word *Phænómenon* thus accented in a dictionary is naturally led to dwell upon the vowel, and pronounces the word thus *phænō-menon* giving the long sound of *o* as in the word *gō*, and ending the syllable with the vowel; whereas were the accent over the *m*, as thus, *phænomenon*, it would be a mark to him that the *o* is to be sounded short, and the *m* taken in to the preceding vowel in forming the syllable, as *phænom-enon*; the *o* changing its sound by means of the accent on the following *m*, in the same manner as if the *m* had been doubled, as in the word *common*. In like manner would he also sound, *abominable*, *abō-minable*, *hab'it*, *bā-bit*, and so forth.

Now as it is an invariable rule throughout our tongue, that whenever the accent is on the consonant, the sound not only of the preceding vowel is always shortened, but no other vowel in the word



has ever its full long sound; and whenever the accent is on the vowel, that vowel always has its full long sound, and all the other vowels in the word are pronounced short; there could not have been a more general guide to pronunciation, in one of the most material articles, than the marking this difference with accuracy. Whereas in the other way, it had been much better there had been no marks at all, as such marks, in half the words of our tongue, necessarily lead into error.

THE whole to conclude with a key to the pronunciation of the English tongue, whereby learners may know how to pronounce most words in our language at sight, notwithstanding the irregularity of our spelling. And with respect to such anomalous words, as can not be reduced to any rule, as the learner, where he has no light from rule to guide him, may always have recourse to the dictionary, it will be in the power of every one to acquire a just pronunciation of all our words, with ease and certainty.

SUCH a grammar and dictionary will lay the foundation for regulating and refining our speech, till it is brought to the degree of perfection whereof in its nature it is capable; and afterwards of fixing it in that state to perpetuity, by a sure and settled standard. For tho' in a living tongue changes are not to be prevented, whilst any plausible colour can be given that such changes are made for the better; yet, after the general rules of analogy shall have been laid open, all alterations hereafter will be made in conformity to those rules, in order to render our language more regular and complete. Nor will novelty or caprice, (the sources of fashion); or partial views of the constitution of our tongue, have it in their power to innovate as usual; for the rising generation, preinstructed in the true genius of our tongue, and the rules by which it ought to be governed,



governed, will oppose any attempts in individuals, to introduce changes not made in conformity to those rules. And such alterations only, as shall by common suffrage be judged necessary to promote order and regularity in our tongue, will, by common suffrage, be admitted.

WHEN a certain standard of pronunciation is in every one's hands, men in general will find the benefit of it too great, readily to admit any alteration but such as shall appear absolutely necessary. Thus will our language be rescued from that worst of evils, a continual fluctuation, in which state it has been from the time of the Saxons to this day.

UPON examination it will be found, that the pronunciation of our tongue has in general been formed upon the best principle in the world. Luckily for us the pedants bore no sway in settling that part of our language; which province, by the power of fashion, fell to the lot of people of education at court: who having no bias of particular or partial rules to misguide them, were governed by one general rule, the very best by which the pronunciation of any tongue could be regulated, which was that of gradually changing the sounds of words, from those which were most difficult, to those which were most easily uttered by the organs of speech. And as it is an indisputable truth, that the sounds which are most easily uttered by the organs of speech, are most pleasing to the organs of hearing, it must be granted, that this is the very best rule by which the pronunciation of any language could be formed. Upon this principle, the pronunciation of English, as used by people of the best taste at court, is so perfect, that there are few, of our words, capable of improvement in that respect. And this is a good reason for seizing  
this



this juncture to fix that pronunciation by a settled standard, in order to make it permanent.

THIS standard once fixed, the English tongue could never again be without a sure one to refer to at all times. For though, in process of time, some changes might take place, and be adopted into general use, yet those changes would, from time to time, be marked by an Appendix to the Dictionary, if few; or, if they should swell to any considerable number, by a new edition.

WITH regard to our spelling, as there are many alterations wanting, so it is probable that many will gradually take place. But those changes will no longer be made by caprice, or from partial and mistaken views of the use and end of written language. All mankind, convinced of the absurdity of considering words upon paper, in any other light, than as representatives of words spoken; and reflecting on the great benefits that would arise, from making spelling a guide to pronunciation, will have that point only in view in all future innovations; and being no longer distracted by different principles, but having one obvious point only before their eyes, will, in process of time, carry it to as great a perfection, as the nature of our defective alphabet will admit.

UPON the whole, if such a Grammar and Dictionary were published, they must soon be adopted into use by all schools professing to teach English. The consequence of teaching children by one method, and one uniform system of rules, would be an uniformity of pronunciation in all so instructed. Thus might the rising generation, born and bred in different countries, and counties, no longer have a variety of dialects, but as subjects of one king, like  
sons



sons of one father, have one common tongue. All natives of these realms would be restored to their birthright in commonage of language, which has been too long fenced in, and made the property of a few. And foreigners would no longer be inhospitably shut out, from a communication with us in an article so essentially necessary to the keeping up a social intercourse with us.



F I N I S.